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The Bible:
Its Structure and Purpose

BY

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"The New Biblical Guide," "What are We to Believe?"
"The Inspiration and Accuracy of the Holy Scriptures."

WITH

AN INTRODUCTION BY

DR. ARTHUR T. PIERSON

VOLUME I.

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INTRODUCTION.

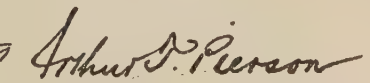
A great conflict is now in progress, and many think it is the last great decisive battle of the ages. A gigantic foe, boastful and pretentious, under the guise of the "higher criticism," wearing the showy armor of German rationalistic scholarship, is defying the armies of the living God.

Many who ought to have proven champions and defenders of the faith once delivered to the Saints, and to the Covenant of Christ, are faint-hearted and flee in dismay.

The author of this series we know; he is a man of strong convictions and of the courage of his convictions, and he shows the spirit of David, and with sling and smooth stones gathered from the brook of the Word of God, he goes forth and meets this Philistine boaster, challenging him to battle in the name of Jehovah.

His writings, we feel, are what in our day meet the needs of the great crisis. He is an intelligent advocate of the truth, and he finds and exposes the weak points of the foe that assails the truth.

The value of his work is acknowledged everywhere by the friends of God's Word. We can safely commend his books to the careful reading of all believers, and we hope that they may have a wide circulation, and may be called to the attention of many whose minds have been disturbed as to the foundation of their faith.



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The Bible: Its Structure and Purpose

THE BIBLE AND CRITICISM: IS THE BATTLE ENDED?

CHAPTER I.

The Present State of the Question.

MUCH is said at the present time of the overthrow of traditional beliefs, and of the necessity under which every intelligent man now lies of adapting himself to the new condition of things. But has criticism already and finally won the battle, and has the time really come to divide the spoil? That is a question which should not fail to be asked by those who are seeking to adjust their theological bearings. If the last word has indeed been spoken, and if that word has confirmed the critical verdict, the outlook is one which we can hardly contemplate with a light heart. The Bible has made our country. The best manhood and womanhood in it have been awed, warned, changed, and cheered by its words. It has repressed what we thought was baser in us, and

strengthened what we thought was nobler. It has humanised us. It has laid upon us the bands of brotherhood. It has done all this because it was received as God's Book, and because we felt that conviction of its sacred character deepened the more we studied its pages. If it is to be to our children all that it has been to us and to our ancestors, we may count upon the same national strength and honour, the same quiet reserve of power, the same hatred of wrong, the same endurance for right. But, if that belief in the Bible is to pass away like a dream, there is little to re-assure us in the usual lofty talk. The ancient world had its philosophies and its culture. But the multitude was dropped as a weight which no philosophy or culture was able to carry; and the best efforts could not save the cultured classes themselves from sinking down into pollution which placed the civilisation of the time infinitely beneath its barbarism.

I am quite aware that truth has its sacrifices, and that no regard for consequences can make us keep on believing that two and two make five. But regard for consequences has its place. It enforces caution. It commends sobriety and earnestness in judgment. Is it really true that science has discredited Scripture? I know that this is confidently asserted, and that it is still oftener assumed as being as much beyond argument as the Copernican theory. But I happen also to know that the science which is supposed to have discredited the Bible is the science of sixty years ago. I know that its indictment of the Creation history

in Genesis cannot be sustained by the science of to-day; that authoritative geology has recently brought back the Flood and finds in it the great dividing line between palæolithic and neolithic man; that, in the brighter light shed by recent research, supposed differences between Scripture and science have disappeared, and left an agreement apparent which is one of the marvels of our time. The man who begins to settle his theological bearings under the belief that science has hopelessly discredited the Bible will, therefore, settle them under an unhappy delusion.

The higher criticism has worked along its own lines and has had its conclusions summarised for the reading public in a Bible Dictionary, in a couple of Encyclopædias, and in the Polychrome Bible. In this last, which is also the most important of the critical publications, we are presented, not with the results of a discussion, but with the demands of a revolutionary junto. This thing of many colours and shreds and patches, which is really the *reductio ad absurdum* of critical methods, is the only Bible which is now to be left to the Churches, the Sunday-schools, the educational institutions, and the homes of our country. And this is no empty threat. This "Bible in tatters" is being handed to ministers and teachers all over the land as the new critical Revelation. It is being presented and accepted as "the truth about the Bible." It has even entered the Mission field. It is easy enough to calculate the results of this movement. When the teacher's place is taken, and the pulpit is filled, by honest men who have no

longer faith in a God-given Bible, how long will that faith linger among the people?

An important decision is consequently forced upon us as a nation. What is to be our attitude toward the new propaganda? Is it to be tame submission or strict inquiry? It may be asked, however, whether a choice is possible? Have not these questions been threshed out by scholars in every way competent to deal with them? Is not the discussion closed, and does not the Polychrome Bible simply gather up the now unchallenged results of a prolonged controversy? No representation could be more misleading than that. There has been, properly speaking, no controversy. The critics have evaded discussion. There are works of undoubted scholarship which have traversed their findings, exposed their unproved assumptions, and triumphantly vindicated the universal convictions of the Christian Church with regard to the Bible. But the critics have not replied to these assailants: they have ignored them. What need is there for argument when you can quench opposition by applying the extinguisher of authority?

The lay mind knows something of the Shakespeare controversy, and has a lively sense of its inherent absurdity. But ridicule has not killed that craze. It has increased in boldness, and now questions the reality of "William Shakespeare." "There is no such historical man," says one, "no individual known who bore that name." It is quite within the limits of possibility that this craze may become fashionable, and that the tradition of the Shakespearian authorship

may be given to the winds. There is an infectious exhilaration in paradox; and this is not without a respectable show of literary research and seemingly forcible arguments. Let us suppose that one professor of English Literature after another is won over to the new views: that, by well-directed influence, those chairs are all gradually captured: that the literary class is impregnated with the new notions; and that by Editors and Reviewers the question is regarded as closed. History would then have repeated itself. For such has been the story of the critical movement. It has won its supposed triumph, not by scholarship or argument, but by sheer audacity and adroit manœuvring.

Yet a temporary success of that kind is not a victory. If the views maintained rest upon solid fact, then the triumph, however achieved, may be expected to endure; but if its basis is only empty theory and mere assumption, the triumph is but the illusion of a moment. How much the imagined victors of to-day have to fear the future the following pages will reveal even to the lay mind.

CHAPTER II.

The Limits of Critical Ability.

THE critics assume that they are able to dissect with accuracy manuscripts which are made up of the work of various writers. This is in fact their

professed business; and it is in the exercise of it that they expect to benefit mankind. They are so conscious of their power in this matter that they assume the name of "experts." By attention to the subtleties of style, and to the peculiarities which distinguish the writing of one age and of one author from that of another, they tell us that they are able to say where the words which flowed from the pen of one writer stopped, and where the words of another writer began. It is this power which has enabled them, they say, to separate Isaiah, not merely into two, but into many, portions; to break up the Book of Genesis—the first of their achievements; and to partition the Book of Revelation—among their last. In short, they fully confess that, without this power of what I may call literary divination, their work would never have been done, and the higher criticism could never have claimed the name of a science.

To see how unquestioningly they believe in this ability of theirs, we have only to open their "Polychrome Bible," Bacon's "Genesis of Genesis," or Addis on "The Documents of the Hexateuch." Here are some of the results gathered in this fierce light which beats upon the Bible. In a single page of "Joshua," by Professor Bennett, besides the main divisions, I find the following instances of penetrating insight. The words: "And all Israel stoned him" (Joshua vii. 25) are separated from the text, and are given to a writer who is supposed to have lived about 500 B.C. These three words: "Then Jehovah relented" (ver. 26) are similarly selected, and are said to

be the work of an author who lived about fifty years earlier. This, it will be confessed, is delicate work; but it is only an illustration of the sharp decisiveness and the firm—I might call it the sublime—assurance which marks all the productions of this "expert" school. Bacon's work is equally astonishing. The passage: "In the day that the Lord—God made the earth and the heavens" (see Genesis ii. 4) is dissected as follows. A stop is made after the word Lord, thus dividing the Divine name in two. The words: "In the day that the Lord—" are assigned to a writer of 800 B.C. Those which precede are said to have been written three hundred and fifty years later; and those which follow, including the word "God," the second part of the amputated Divine name, are alleged to be due to a third writer, an editor, about whose exact date there is still some difference of opinion among the "experts."

But to stop even here would give the general public no adequate conception of critical self-confidence. They are not only able to judge of what they see, but they can with equally imaginary infallibility divine what they cannot see. We used to be told that, when the Genesis narrative was separated, the critical analysis justified itself to every unbiassed mind. The two accounts were said to be so beautifully complete! That superstition still lingers in many quarters; but everybody has not read Bacon's Genesis. It needs some painful but pretty patching to make up "the two narratives." There we find that "The Judean Prophetic Narrative" opens thus: "When as yet there was neither earth nor heaven but only the limitless

abyss, Yahweh set fast the foundations of the earth, and raised up its pillars in the midst of the waters. And over its surface He spread out the dome of the heaven, establishing there the courses of the sun and the moon and the stars; but upon the surface of the earth beneath there was neither motion nor life: all was yet a solitude."

The reader rubs his eyes. He thought he knew the opening chapters of Genesis. He casts his eye down to the foot of the page and finds that the above is a critical make-up! Here is the note which meets his glance: "Conjecturally restored from indications in the earlier literature . . . . . and by comparison with the Babylonian cosmogonic myths." One is able to comment upon many things. This is beyond me. It must be left in its naked effrontery. Let "CONJECTURALLY RESTORED" be its only inscription and its epitaph.

It will be clear, however, that everything is based upon the assumed possession of this marvellous power to say where one writer's work ends, and another's begins. Without this there would have been no discrimination of "sources;" no partition of documents; and, in a word, no higher criticism. Let this supposed ability be successfully questioned, and the painfully piled up edifice is not merely shaken to its foundations —it lies in irremediable ruin. But it is already demonstrated that there are, and can be, no "experts" of this sort. The assumed possession of this power has been put to the test again and again, and the results have made these pretensions utterly incredible.

There exists, for example, a confessedly composite work in Finnish literature. Dr. Lönnrot, the collector of the Finnic Folk-poetry, formed a great epic—the Kalevala—by fusing together a large collection of those ancient songs. He bequeathed his manuscripts to the Society of Finnish Literature, so that what he borrowed and what he added are made perfectly clear. This work afforded too good a test of this imaginary critical power to be left unused. The critics were set to work; and with lamentable results. "While ignorant of the actual facts of the surviving songs," says Andrew Lang, "critical ingenuity could only give us, at many hands and from many sides, its usual widely discrepant results." And he adds: "We cannot trust it when the test of facts, of documents, cannot be applied." Not very long ago, an enthusiastic admirer of Thackeray (every characteristic and trick of whose pen he believed he knew) engaged in a search for papers which had not been embraced in that writer's collected works. He at last discovered a number in some early volumes of *Punch*. He had no doubt whatever as to the authorship. The mark of the master-hand was everywhere; and he was certain that, to any man who knew Thackeray's style, doubt was impossible. Arrangements were made for the re-issue of the newly-discovered writings in a leading literary organ in America. Some of the papers had already appeared, when a communication was received from the *Punch* Office, saying that the treasurer's books made it plain that the articles were not Thackeray's. The re-publication was immediately

stopped, and the Editor retired from an ignominious position with as much grace as the circumstances permitted. The history of literature abounds with such facts. Critics, who can be trusted to divine the authorship of documents, have never existed. They do not exist now: and a "science" built upon that assumption rests upon what is considerably less substantial than air. I say nothing of the professed ability to furnish *verbatim* copies of manuscripts which no man has ever seen. I believe that the records of the higher criticism contain the only example of such a pretension outside the annals of a lunatic asylum.

CHAPTER III.

The Morality of Ancient Transcribers.

A SECOND, and equally vital, assumption is that concealed, composite authorship of this kind is to be expected in ancient documents. This is not usually avowed as an axiom of criticism. For a science, it frequently exhibits the haziest ideas regarding its postulates. But the more logical minds see something of the necessity, and they do their best to meet it. For example, in the article "Bible," in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, the late Prof. W. Robertson Smith explains how this early Bible history was put together. "It is," he says, "a stratification and not an organism. This process was facilitated by the habit of anonymous writing, and the accompanying

lack of all notion of copyright. If a man copied a book, it was his to add and modify as he pleased, and he was not in the least bound to distinguish the old from the new. If he had two books before him to which he attached equal worth, he took large extracts from both, and harmonised them by such additions or modifications as he felt to be necessary."

That in Aberdeen and the surrounding districts, as in many a place besides, there was anciently a chronic difficulty in distinguishing between *meum* and *tuum*, we are not inclined to dispute. But we have not the slightest hesitation in describing the above extract as an unworthy libel upon literary antiquity. There is nothing to justify it. There is nothing even to suggest it, apart from the necessities of the higher criticism. For more than 2,000 years we know that the Jew would have regarded such manipulation of the sacred text as the most fearful of all possible crimes. One of their greatest ancient books, the Massōrah, was anciently compiled to be "a fence to the Law." It collected the ancient traditions concerning the sacred text; and it enters into details regarding the text, the sole object of which is to prevent even accidental variation in the production of copies. "The Massorah," says one who will not be suspected of exaggeration,* "indicates the number of times that the same word is found in the beginning, middle, or end of a verse. . . . . The Massorah to the Pentateuch informs us which is the middle letter of the Law; and the Massorah at the

* J. Scott Porter.

end of the Bible is said to give the number of times that each letter of the alphabet occurs from the beginning to the end of the Old Testament. . . The object of the Massorets," he adds, "in devoting so much time and pains to these minutiæ was doubtless the very laudable one of forming a correct and standard text of their religious code and of preserving it *in perpetuum* pure from every corruption." A nation does not change in a day. It does not change completely without leaving some trace or echo of the revolution. But there is not the slightest evidence or hint to be found anywhere that the attitude of the Jew towards the Scripture ever deviated from this reverence and this scrupulous care that it should be handed down to after times without the alteration of a single letter. And yet this is the people whom the critics credit with these huge alterations and interpolations; with cutting up, piecing together, and issuing in such a shape that the authors, whose works they are said to have handled, would not have known their own productions!

But it may, and no doubt will, be suggested that remoter times are not to be judged by what comes within the view of even ancient history. Now, allowing this suggestion for a moment, where could the Jew have learned the art of falsifying documents? We have more than enough evidence to show that it was not national; but evil communications corrupt good manners, and—let us say—the Jew may have picked it up in Babylon. According to the critics, during the captivity and the times which immediately followed

the captivity, the Jews were more than usually busy in the manufacturing, and patching, and piecing together of what we have so long looked upon as the ancient Books of the Bible. Well, then, did this literary contamination surround them in Babylonia? Was this the practice of the Babylonian scribes in regard to ancient books? To this question we have a full reply; and that is a most emphatic repudiation of the charge. Transcription was in constant operation in Babylonia, but it was carried out with scrupulous fidelity. Every one who is acquainted with the inscriptions has been furnished with sufficient proof of that. A closer study by those who are really "experts" in Babylonian literature entirely confirms our first impressions. In an elaborate, though brief, paper upon this subject by Dr. Pinches, which the reader will find further on,* he gives proofs of the care with which the ancient texts were handed down; while Dr. Sayce, in a letter which I recently received from him, writes: "The Assyrians were very exact in their reproduction of ancient texts, reproducing them, indeed, with Massoretic fidelity, a point which is of importance when we remember their near relationship to the Jews." It is plain, therefore, that even if Israel had been already deep in those alleged practices of literary theft and forgery which the critics credit them with, their conscience must have been stirred within them as they contemplated the nobler fidelity of the heathen. But both Babylon and Israel repel the charge. The practice in the ancient East was

* See Appendix to this chapter.

the practice of the West of to-day. The ancient scribe kept as faithfully to the letter of the manuscript which he transcribed as the modern printer keeps to his copy.

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER III.

The Babylonians as Transmitters of Ancient Documents. By Theophilus G. Pinches, LL.D.*

THERE is but little doubt that the existence of such a mass of literature as that of the Babylonians and Assyrians, with its original inscriptions extending from, say, 3000 B.C. to within a few decades of the Christian era, is of considerable importance for estimating the value of the documents produced by the Semitic race in general, and the Babylonian and Hebrew nations, who were so closely akin, in particular. Naturally, scribes and copyists differ very much among themselves in every nationality, and probably the careless always greatly outnumber the careful. But the carelessness of the careless may be, and probably would be, modified by the nature of the text which he was reproducing. If it were something which did not interest him, we might expect his copy to be very bad. If he was merely interested in it, we might expect the correctness or incorrectness of his copy to vary in accordance with the intensity of that interest. If, on the other hand, it was something in which he was not merely interested, but an inscription of a religious nature, affecting, perhaps, his life and his prospects in

* Author of *The Old Testament in the Light of the Legends, &c., &c.*

this world, and bearing upon the position of his soul hereafter, we might expect his copy to be unsurpassable in correctness; which, in fact, would, in its turn, be limited only by the limit of his intelligence—for intelligence enters largely into a question such as this.

But the variants in an inscription do not originate, as a rule, in the mistakes which a scribe might make; they arise also from other causes. Thus, where there is no fixed spelling, two or more ways of writing a word may exist—indeed, the ways of writing it are only bounded by the limits of intelligibility. Another fruitful source of variants is the substitution of a word of similar sound for that which is in the text—due, probably, to its having been dictated. Then, there is the substitution of synonyms, which sometimes gives to an inscription a value which it would not otherwise have. To this section, naturally, belongs the substitution of one form of a root for another, caused by the peculiarities which characterise all Semitic languages. Finally, there is the substitution of one character for another, due either to their great similarity (a frequent cause of confusion in the case of the Phœnician alphabet and the systems of writing derived from it, Hebrew being one of those most liable to this disadvantage), or to decay in the document, which can work havoc with texts written even in the clearest and best system of writing possible. The individual peculiarities of a writer are also a fruitful source of error, as every reader of modern handwriting knows. Mistakes in consequence of not understanding ancient forms of characters are exceedingly rare.

The variants in ancient inscriptions may, therefore, arise from :—

1. Mistakes on the part of the copyist.

2. Different ways of writing a word.
3. Substitution of a word of similar sound.
4. Substitution of a word of similar meaning.
5. Similarities in characters.
6. Damage to the inscription.
7. Mannerisms in writing.

Naturally, it is difficult to bring clear examples of all these, but quotations from the tablets will illustrate many of them, and enable an estimate to be made of the general accuracy of the scribes of Babylonia and Assyria.

If we take a representative book of Assyrian and Babylonian inscriptions—say the fourth volume of the *Cuneiform Inscriptions of Western Asia*, second edition —we shall see that, out of a total of seventy-three plates, no less than forty-four have variants; and where these are absent, it is probably due to the nature of the inscriptions, the originals being sometimes letters, of which no duplicates are likely to be found, or copies of boundary-stones, &c., which are in the same case.

To take a typical example, we may glance for a short time at the tablet referring to the Flood. This inscription has no less than 200 variants from the different duplicates, divided almost equally between the obverse and the reverse. The following list of a few of them will give an idea of their nature:—

1. The addition of a phonetic complement to the name of the Babylonian Noah, Ut-napištim.
2. *Ya-a-ti* (the full form) for *ya-ti* (defective writing).
3. *Ya-si* (a variant form) for *ya-ti*.
4. *A-na*, "to," spelled out in full.
5. *-tam*, the accusative ending (fem.) with "mimmation," instead of the genitive *-ti*.

6. *E-li*, instead of *e-lu*.

7. *Tas-'-um* for *tas-u* (a fuller and better spelling).

8. *Ana* written ideographically (the reverse of four).

9. *-ta*, the accusative (fem.) ending, for *-ti* (the former is the more correct).

10. [*Su*] *-u-ri-pak* for *Su-ri-ip-pak* (the name of a city).

It will thus be seen that the variants in a Babylonian or Assyrian text, though numerous, do not affect the sense, and are often valuable as illustrations or aids to the modern student.

Naturally, the ancient nations could not lay claim to the critical acumen of modern science, nor to the painful exactitude of the Hebrew scribes in later times, which led the last-named to count the words and the letters of their sacred Scriptures, and made them resort to various devices to ensure their correct transmission, even in cases which they themselves thought to be doubtful—indeed, reverence for the text had brought about, with them, something like the critical faculty which modern scholars now possess. How they made up for this strictness by extravagant interpretations, and exegetical comments, juggling with the words and the phrases of the sacred text, every student knows. Moreover, they seem not to have taken the best text in every case; nor did they, to all appearance, attempt to make up a standard text from the different manuscripts which undoubtedly existed in ancient times (if they had done this, our modern versions would have been far superior to what they are)—they simply took a version which they regarded as the right one, and accepted that to the exclusion of all others, for better or for worse.*

*This finds a simple explanation in the existence of the Temple copy of the Old Testament Scripture. This was preserved in the Sanctuary, which, Josephus tells us, was carried among the other spoils in Vespasian's Roman triumph.—J.U.

The Assyro-Babylonians, on the other hand, were far from being exclusive to that extent. Whether they would have ultimately become so or not is naturally doubtful. They died out as a nationality, and their religion died also—the former some centuries before, the latter some centuries after, the Christian era, and their literature ceased to exist. The result is, that no standard texts were ever adopted by them.

But in one case at least they produced something far better than this, namely, a bilingual glossary of the final tablet of the Semitic story of the Creation; and the remains of this, which are extant, not only prove that its origin came from late Sumerian times, but also set the signification of all the words of which it is composed beyond a doubt—that is, as far as such fleeting things as words and their meanings can be fixed. Line by line, root by root, the words are taken, and explained in the Semitic Babylonian language. The following specimen will serve to show the system, and may probably interest the reader. We will take the line:

"God of the good wind, Lord of hearing and obedience."

This is explained, taking the root-words of the Sumerian original, as follows:

Dimmer	God.
Tu	Wind.
Du	Good.
Dimmer	Lord.
Zi	To hear.
Zi	To obey.

To all appearance, the words "God" and "Lord" were expressed by the same word in the Sumerian

text, as were also "to hear" and "to obey." The following is another example:—

"Father Bel called his name 'lord of the lands.'"

En kurkura*	His name.
Ma	Name.
Ma	To proclaim.
A	Father.
En kurkura	The god Bel.

In this we get something which goes beyond the statement of the text; for we see that, in naming Merodach *En-kurkura*, "lord of the lands," father Bel, as he is called, was giving to Merodach his own name, which agrees with the context. We have here, therefore, one of the most remarkable documents bearing upon Babylonian religious beliefs, showing, moreover, how they ensured, in a most practical way, the integrity of the text of their great epic of the Creation and their belief in the doctrine that, though Merodach was not the oldest of the gods, and was the son of Aê or Êa, he was nevertheless to be identified with the other deities, regarded as the creator and the preserver of all things, and the merciful one who was good to mankind.

Quoting from the same text, I give examples of the differences which are to be found therein. After the line, "God of the good wind," &c., quoted above (this line has no variants), the text proceeds as follows:—

"Creator of fairness and plenty, establisher of abundance."

(In one text "and" is left out, and the last word has a lengthening, showing that the non-Semitic equivalent was used).

*This is transcribed in Sumerian, like the other words in this column, but a variant in the legend itself suggests that it was read *Bêl mâtati*—that is, as a Semitic phrase—with the same meaning, "lord of the lands."

"He who turns to many whatever is few."
(The word for "few" has a different termination in one copy, and that for "many" has a different spelling in another).

"In (our) dire need we scented his sweet breath."
(The word for "dire" is omitted in one copy, that for "breath" is spelled out instead of being represented by an ideograph, that for "we scented" has a different ending in one copy, and that for "need" a different ending in each of the two duplicates).

Such are the variants in this important text; and throughout the inscription, wherever there are duplicates, similar changes in the words, either more or less pronounced than here, are to be found. It is very rarely, however, that there is a real change in the sense, even so slight as the omission of the almost needless word which I have translated "dire" (it really means "strong").

It is needless to multiply examples of the variants in Babylonian and Assyrian inscriptions—they are of value mainly to the student—sometimes of considerable value. As has already been remarked, there are over 200 variants in the story of the Flood from the fragments of duplicates known, but of all those referring to the obverse—100 odd—comparatively few, as far we are able to judge, affect the sense:—

Text: "Istar spake like a mother."
Variant: "Istar spake with loud voice."
Text: "Sîrtu called out, making her voice resound."
Variant: "The lady of the gods called out," &c.

Other variants are, "in the assembly" for "in the presence;" "torrent, storm, and flood," instead of "wind, flood, and storm," &c.; some of the variants

apparently changing or modifying the sense of the whole line.

The reason of the difference in the first line of the two just quoted is the likeness in sound, "like a mother," being *kima alitti;* and, "with loud voice," *maliti*. This naturally points to a certain amount of carelessness, and which of the two readings is the more trustworthy time alone will show. The scribe who gives *kima alitti*, however, has, at the end of the foregoing paragraph, apparently a correction of the text. He has written in the margin *ina*, "in;" but gives in the text *ana*, "to" or "for," the sense of the whole being:—

> "For the guiding of the ship, I gave the great house (*i.e.*, the vessel), with its goods, to Buzur-Kurgala, the pilot."

Whether the scribe's marginal reading indicates a variant, or, in his opinion, an erroneous reading, is uncertain; but it indicates that he took pains to reproduce his original as far as in him lay.

The Creation and the Deluge Legends are probably the most important of the old literary remains of Babylonia and Assyria, and for that reason they have been spoken of first. Another text of which the Babylonians thought a great deal, however, is "the Story of Ludlul, the Sage." This inscription, which is one of extreme difficulty, speaks of the evil of the world and the necessity of piety, and is of a more or less philosophical nature. On account of the depth of its contents, apparently, it was much thought of; and duplicates of four or five copies, both from Assyria and Babylonia, are extant. The important thing about this inscription is, that many of the words were obscure to the Babylonians,

notwithstanding that it was written in their own language, and it was necessary to have an explanation of them. This being the case, a list of the lines containing the obscure words was compiled, and translations of the unusual words contained therein were given. In this we have likewise an excellent example of an inscription carefully preserved and handed down to posterity. For the modern scholar, explanations of a few more words to us obscure would have been highly appreciated, but for the Babylonians there is no doubt that the explanations given were all that was needed; and for this, we, too, have to be thankful. The variants in this inscription and in the lines extracted for explanation are few; but when they occur, they are of great value for the phrases which they explain.

It is probably in the non-Semitic or Sumero-Akkadian inscriptions which the Semitic Babylonians translated, however, that the most diversified variations occur. This is due to the fact that that language had a great many homophones, or words pronounced, or at least written, in the same way, but varying greatly in meaning, and the scribes differed as to the best way of reproducing them, even when they agreed as to the sense. Another cause of variants in these inscriptions lies in the fact, that Sumero-Akkadian was an agglutinative tongue, using, in its most analytical form, numerous prefixed, infixed, and suffixed pronouns and postpositions; the omission of one or more of which was easy, as was also the substitution of one synonymous or nearly synonymous pronominal or prepositional particle for another. Unfortunately, we have not enough non-Semitic inscriptions with duplicates to enable a decided opinion concerning their accuracy to be formed, but to all appearance the

scribes of old Kengi-Ura, or non-Semitic Shinar, were less exact than those of the Semitic period, either in Assyria or Babylonia.

Another interesting example of the care with which an inscription was copied is exhibited by the explanatory word-list published on pl. 23 of the 2nd vol. of the *Cuneiform Inscriptions of Western Asia*. The obverse of this text is almost entirely lost, but the reverse (about 185 lines) is fairly well preserved. It contains lists of unusual and foreign synonyms of words for "sprout" or "branch," "tree," various well-known trees, "forest," "door," "lock," "bolt," "bed," "couch," &c., followed by the colophon stating that the inscription belonged to Aššur-banî-âpli, the "great and noble Asnapar" of the Book of Ezra. Some of these words are described as Elamite, and others as belonging to the language designated by the character *Su*. The interesting thing about this inscription, however, is that it bears clear evidence of having been copied from a defective Babylonian original, the principal word for this being one meaning "seat," or "throne," and written *kistin*, or *kishi*, it being only in the Babylonian style of writing that the characters *din* and *hi* could be confounded with each other. In addition to this we have the variants *appahum* and *appari*, due to the likeness between *hu* and *ri*; *huralbu* and *hurallum* (the latter apparently the more correct), due to the similarity between *bu* and *lum*; and seemingly also *ikzû* and *iksû*, "door," due to the likeness between *zu* and *su*. All these defects the scribe has conscientiously recorded, and the whole inscription is a testimony to his honesty and impartiality.

In the three inscriptions which have been examined above, namely, the Creation, the Flood, and the explana-

tory list, it may be taken that they exhibit in each case a different motive. The glossary of the first was doubtless compiled to preserve the original text, which, as has been already noted, was non-Semitic. As for the list, the variants in that are such as ought to exist in a work of a linguistic nature. There is no doubt, therefore, that Babylonian and Assyrian inscriptions in general show considerable care in their transmission, and sometimes even a critical mind.

It is not at all certain, however, that the glossary to the last tablet of the Creation Legend was simply, as above stated, to preserve the original text—it may have had a deeper motive, namely, to keep the legend in its integrity, and get rid of the possibility of changes being made in it. If this be the case, it is not at all improbable that the Jews of the Captivity were in reality the pupils of the Babylonians in the matter of the correct transmission of manuscripts; and having once realised the importance of such things, development and improvements in the system were easy.

CHAPTER IV.

The Higher Criticism Based upon Impossible Assumptions.

THE reader will gather from the above how faithfully the Assyrian and Babylonian scribes kept to the ancient texts which they handed down to posterity. The allegation that our modern practice of faithful adherence to "copy" is a consequence of

clearer views as to the rights of authorship finds no support in the abounding literature of Babylonia, nor in the literature of any other people. For the Jews to have interpolated texts; to have mingled documents together; and, in a word, to have committed the forgeries and the pious frauds attributed to them by the critics, would have been a crime unparalleled, and as shocking to the national and individual conscience of the East, from the sixth to the second century B.C., as it would be to the national and individual conscience in the Europe of to-day.

Nothing, indeed, can be less worthy of the name of "criticism" than this unfounded suspicion of antiquity. Scholarship has already had some object lessons as to the ultimate fate of capricious prejudice. It is natural for suspicious ignorance to feel that, since all the originals of the classic works of antiquity have perished, our confidence in the copies of them which have come down to us has now no solid ground to rest upon. "So impressed," says Dr. William Forsyth, "was the Abbé Hardouin, born in 1646, with this difficulty, that he gravely propounded the theory that the so-called works of the classic writers of Greece and Rome were nothing but forgeries of the monks. . . . The Abbé affected to believe that the so-called ancient classics had been composed in the thirteenth century, by the help of the remains of Cicero and Pliny, the Georgics of Virgil, and the Satires and Epistles of Horace, which he declared were the only relics of antiquity in that period. He attributed the Æneid to a Benedictine

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monk, who wished to describe in an allegory the journey of St. Peter to Rome. It is, indeed, difficult to believe that this was not a literary joke; but the Abbé seems to have been thoroughly in earnest, and, if so, it appears not to have struck him that there is such a thing as internal evidence and moral impossibility. The idea of mediæval monks being able to compose the works of Homer and of Plato; of Cicero and of Virgil; does not deserve repetition."*

It is well known that the transcribing of manuscripts was an art which was carefully cultivated in ancient times. And recent discoveries are correcting the theories even of sober criticism regarding the suspected unreliability of the transcribers of manuscripts. The old dust heaps of Egypt have been turned over in the search for ancient manuscripts, and some astonishing discoveries have been made. Among others some extracts from the Phaedo, Plato's dialogue on the immortality of the soul, have been found. This precious bit of papyrus was written about a century after the death of Plato for a soldier who apparently desired to carry it with him while upon his campaigns. The circumstances were, consequently, not such as demanded any great care in copying; and yet the comparison of this papyrus, which goes back at least to 200 B.C., with one of the later manuscripts of Plato's works, shows with what striking fidelity the ancient copyists were accustomed to do their work. It has also shown that the carefully-weighed corrections which were suggested

* *History of Ancient Manuscripts*, William Forsyth, Q.C., LL.D., pp. 2, 3.

by Greek scholars, have, in eighteen out of nineteen instances, been wide of the mark. Professor Lewis Campbell, one of the foremost Greek scholars of the time, deals at considerable length with this papyrus and its lessons for textual criticism. After referring to those eighteen instances of the powerlessness even of the best-equipped literary conjecture, he says: "Thus, in one instance only, out of nineteen selected by Schanz, or in two at most, has any scholar anticipated the readings here discovered; and, in the only certain instance—the excision of words supplementing an ellipsis—the conjecture was withdrawn by the conjecturer in favour of another." * And he concludes: "As compared with the hypothesis of modern editors, the 'accretions' proved to have accumulated in the interval of 1,200 years between the papyrus and the Bodleian MS. are, so far, not considerable. . . . If time has gathered some dross, time has also taken away some morsels of fine gold. But the amount both of incrustation and of decay is extremely small. Nor are the corrections of the MS. readings which the papyrus supplies of a kind which could be remedied by conjecture, as the facts have proved." †

With these decisive facts before us, the higher criticism must be abandoned as a delusion. But there are also other, and not less cogent, reasons for repudiating its "ascertained results." It began with a huge blunder which can only be explained by rationalistic haste to escape from the trammels of

* *The Classical Review*, vol. v., p. 365. † Page 455.

Revelation. Astruc and Eichhorn, and all that followed, declared that the hands of two distinct writers could be traced in Genesis. One spoke of God as *Elohim*, the other as Jehovah (I decline, on strictly philological grounds, to use the now fashionable reading "Jahweh"). This meant that these words belonged to different periods, one being an older name for the Divine Being, the other a later. It implied also that the names were interchangeable; that the writer who used the name Jehovah could have written Elohim instead, and *vice versa*. Both these suppositions must now be abandoned. Assyriology has proved that both names were in use from the earliest times; and there are multitudes of places in the Hebrew Bible in which the interchange of these names is impossible. Throughout the whole Old Testament period this law prevails, making the interchange of the names impracticable. This fact is in itself sufficient to wreck the critical theories. The alleged "facts" by which they have justified their conclusions are monuments of similar haste and untrustworthiness. Nothing is more common than the statement that there are two accounts of the Creation in Genesis. To show this, the fourth verse of the second chapter is divided, and its opening words, "These are the generations *(Tholedoth)* of the heavens and of the earth," are taken as the termination of the alleged "first account of the creation." But in this way *Tholedoth*, "the generations," would be used in the sense of "origin," a sense which the word never has, and never can have had. "The

Tholedoth of the heavens and of the earth" are the things which came from these, and not those from which the heavens and the earth have come. In other words, every Hebrew scholar must admit that *Tholedoth* refers, not to what has gone before, but to what comes after—to those events, namely, for which the material creation prepared the way. A third example of the fatuity which has attended the higher criticism will suffice. The two chief writers in Genesis are distinguished, we are told, by another characteristic. One writer uses the name "Padan-Aram" for a certain district, the other calls it "Aram-Naharaim." This so-called "fact" has had an immense effect. But it is not, and never was, a "fact." It is now what it was at first, a simple hallucination. We now know from the inscriptions that the names are those of entirely different places, and were never marks of different writers. We have only to take up *seriatim* the usual proofs advanced for the critical hypothesis to add to this catalogue of blunders; and these, let it be remembered, are still actually paraded as the foundation of their "science"!

I shall conclude by briefly indicating two other important points. The legendary and apocryphal character of the Old Testament history is assumed as self-evident. But the discoveries made in Egypt, Palestine, Assyria, and Babylonia have steadily overthrown the critical conclusions. *Daniel* and *Esther* have been shown to be so accurate in their references to the customs, the men, the places, and the times on which they touch, that no one acquainted with these

recent researches can continue to believe in the alleged apocryphal character of these writings. The Books of Chronicles have been re-instated as history. Research has also so riddled Wellhausen's hypothesis that archæologists like Sayce and Hommel have been compelled to abandon his school. And the farther we advance in the knowledge of the times with which the Old Testament deals, the more deeply are we convinced of its historical character, and of its Divine uniqueness.

It is among the most fundamental assumptions of the higher criticism that the supernatural origin of the Old Testament is simply inadmissible. The supernatural is ruled out. Revelation, in the honest, old-fashioned sense of the word, is to the critic a myth too self-evident to require even a passing notice. I might ask whether an attitude of that kind is really scientific. But I limit myself to pointing out that this assumption, like the rest, cannot be sustained. I know that a resolute attempt has been made to annihilate prophecy. But the attempt has not succeeded. What am I to make of the following undoubted fact? The whole of the Old Testament is alive with a unique expectation. There are reminiscences of this in the myths and legends of the nations—self-evident wrecks of a primeval Revelation; but in Israel it becomes a hope round which gather the destinies of the people. A Deliverer is to come, whose bruised heel is to crush the serpent's head. He is to be of the seed of Abraham, that is, He is to be a Jew; and in Him all nations of the earth are to be blessed.

He is to be despised and rejected by the very people who glory in the hope of His coming. He is to die the death of a malefactor; but His suffering is to be an expiation for the sins of humanity. After His death His career of blessing is to begin, and His great and enduring triumph is to be won. These are by no means all the features which are found distinct and clear in this wonderful portraiture. But, though our view be limited to these, is it possible to explain how every one of these prophetic delineations is an accurate description of what has become history in the life of Christ, and in the career of the Christian Church? Where, outside the Bible, shall we find a parallel to this constellation of predictions? And if they and their marvellous accomplishment do not constitute a miracle, and demonstrate the intervention in this world's affairs of a Mind that has read the future—in other words, an Omniscient Mind—what would do so? Professor Reuss, of Strasburg, says that "the present generation, casting off more and more its Voltairean prejudices, understands that Christianity is the most momentous fact in the history of mankind, that which for more than fifteen centuries has determined the religious, moral, social, and intellectual development of our race, and which will still determine it in an ever-widening future."* That is a sufficiently marvellous fact. If we ask whence is this religion that has swept away the hideous idolatries of the earth, purified the fountains of human thought, and led the nations into light and goodness, what answer has our fashionable

rationalism to give? And when I add that this very renewal of the world was undeniably predicted, are we not once more face to face with miracle?

These are problems which the higher criticism has ignored, and has not solved; but so long as they are left without explanation, the basis of Christianity remains.

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* *History of Christian Theology in the Apostolic Age.* Preface.

HOW DID WE GET THE BIBLE?

CHAPTER I.

The Question Stated.

IN dealing with the Books of the Bible it is impossible to overlook one important fact. We do not require to search for these Books and to pick them up here and there as explorers may chance to light upon them. They are presented in a well-known and deeply venerated collection. There are various and striking features in that collection which attract notice and excite inquiry. The Books are arranged in a certain well-known order, and that order betrays what seems to be a well-defined and completed plan. The Books do not resemble stones that have simply been thrown upon a heap. They are, on the contrary, like stones which have been built into a well-planned and completed structure; and many, if not all, of the stones have evidently been shaped for the places which they occupy. To whom do we owe that plan, and the collecting and the building of the stones? This question has seldom found so forcible a statement as this which we owe to the pen of Professor Hitchcock. "That so many books," he says, "of so many kinds, historic, poetic, dogmatic, and prophetic, from the pens of so many writers of such various culture and

so far apart in history, should yet be only One Book, with a unity as perfect as that of any drama, is a phenomenon which no infidel theory accounts for. The Apocryphal books, whether of the Old or of the New Testament, do not trouble us. The more they are studied, the more clear it becomes that they deserve no place in the Canon. It is felt to have been a sure instinct that ruled them out." To whose "instinct," then, do we owe this unerring selection?

A more learned statement of our question would be —to whom do we owe "the Canon" of Scripture? It will be well not to encumber ourselves unnecessarily with technical terms, but this has so long had a place in the inquiry upon which we are entering that we can hardly escape using the word. "Canon" is simply a Greek word *(Kanōn)* put into English letters. It originally meant "a straight rod;" then a rod used in measuring, like our "foot rule;" then "a rule" of any kind. In this last sense it is used in the New Testament. In Galatians vi. 16 we read: "As many as walk according to this RULE *(Kanōn)*, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God." The term, as used in ecclesiastical literature, points, therefore, to the Bible as the one law of the believer and of the Church of Christ. It is our "rule" for belief and conduct. Whatever is not contained therein has no claim upon our faith or our obedience. This, it may be remarked, plainly implies Divine origin. That, which had proceeded from man only, would never have been enthroned as the supreme law of the Church of God.

But when the word "canon" has been explained and adopted, it does not answer our question. On the contrary, it makes a reply still more necessary. If these Books have this high place assigned to them; if they supersede all others, and are alone to be the rule of our thinking and the guide of our life, we wish to know how they have come to us. We are, indeed, aware that they claim this high place because they have come from God. They carry with them, wherever they go, the credentials of their great mission and unchallengeable proofs of their Divine origin. These are things whose marvellousness no eagerness to receive the Books can increase, and which no neglect of them can impair. But we nevertheless desire to know whether any care was taken for their preservation, and how it happened that they were gathered together, kept separate from all other literature of their own and of after times, and set in this seat of supreme authority.

To this important question we are happily able to obtain a satisfactory reply. For one part of the Canon has been formed in times to which we are able to go back. We shall, therefore, put theories aside, and acquaint ourselves with the facts. We shall ask what history has to say regarding the manner in which the New Testament Books were received and collected together. Were they first of all received as ordinary productions; and then, as time rolled on, was this estimate changed; and was everything that had come from apostolic hands regarded more and more as a sacred possession? And

were the Books, under this deepening sense of their value, sought out and set apart by themselves as the priceless possession of the Christian Church? If *that* was the origin of our New Testament, history will tell us; and we now proceed to ask what history has to say regarding it. But if, on the other hand, there was no such growth of reverence—if the Books were received from the first, not as precious mementos of revered men, but as Divine—history may be expected to make this equally plain.

CHAPTER II.

The Councils and the New Testament.

AN idea that was largely entertained, and of which much has been made in recent discussions, is that we owe the collection of the New Testament Books to the early Councils of the Christian Church. This notion has been fostered by the Romish Church, and, perhaps, also encouraged by Protestant appeals to the early Councils and the Fathers. But it is quite opposed to the plain testimony of history. Even Professor Eduard Reuss, of Strasburg, virtually admits, in his rationalistic book on "The History of the Canon of the Holy Scriptures," that this belief is without foundation. Speaking of the Council of Trent, held in 1545, he says: "These preliminary debates were long and interesting, and prove more

than anything else how much reason I had for saying that never before had the Canon been officially fixed."* The reason that he gives for this opinion is conclusive. "If it had been fixed"—that is, fixed by the decree of a Council—"the prelates and Canonists assembled at Trent would not have failed to make appeal purely and simply to the authority of the former decision; whereas we learn, not without some agreeable surprise, that the question was treated as if it were still untouched."

The striking fact that the early Councils had nothing whatever to do with forming the Canon of the New Testament, has been so emphasised by a number of writers that one is astonished that it is not more widely known. I give a few of these testimonies. Dr. George Salmon, of Trinity College, Dublin, writes, in dealing with the Gospels†: "It is a remarkable fact that we have no early interference of Church authority in the making of a Canon; no Council discussed the subject; no formal decisions were made. The Canon seems to have shaped itself; and if, when we come further on, you are disposed to complain of this because of the vagueness of the testimony of antiquity to one or two disputed books, let us remember that this non-interference of authority is a valuable topic of evidence to the genuineness of our Gospels; for it thus appears that it was owing to no adventitious authority, but by their own weight, that they crushed all rivals out of existence. Whence could they have had this weight except from its being

* Page 275. † *Introduction to the New Testament*, p. 144.

known that the framers of these Gospels were men of superior authority to the others, or with access to fuller information?"

There are other references to the formation of the Canon in Dr. Salmon's work, which is one of the most valuable books of its kind. The reader will appreciate the following extract, long though it be. "Some fifty years ago or more" (Dr. Salmon is writing in 1885), "a Mr. Hone, who was at that time an opponent of orthodoxy, if not of Christianity (though I understand he afterwards regretted the line he had taken), published what he called the Apocryphal New Testament, which had considerable sale at the time, and which may still be picked up on stalls or at auctions. The object of the publication clearly was to disparage the pre-eminent authority which we ascribe to the Books of our New Testament, by making it appear that those which we honour had been picked out of a number of books with tolerably equal claims to our acceptance, the selection having been made by persons in whom we have no reason to feel much confidence. The work professes to be an answer to the question, 'After the writings contained in the New Testament were selected from the numerous Gospels and Epistles then in existence, what became of the books that were rejected by the compilers?' The epoch of the compilation is apparently assumed to be that of the Council of Nicæa. The writer, at least, quotes a mediæval story, that the selection of Canonical Books was then made by miracle, the right Books having jumped up on the table, and the worng

ones remained under it; and it would seem as if, though rejecting the miracle, he received the fact that the Council settled the Canon. He proceeds to quote some remarks from Jortin on the violence of the proceedings at the Council, and we are given to understand that if the selection was not made then, it was made by people not more entitled to confidence. He then gives a selection of Apocryphal Gospels, Acts, and Epistles taken from works of orthodox writers, but divided by himself into verses (and, where that had not been done before, into chapters), obviously with the intention of giving to these strange Gospels, Epistles, and Acts as nearly as possible the same appearance to the eye of the English reader as that presented by the old ones with which he was familiar.

"I need not tell you," Dr. Salmon continues, "that the Council of Nicæa did not meddle with the subject of the Canon, and so we need not trouble ourselves to discuss the proofs that the members of that venerable Synod were frail and fallible men like ourselves. The fact is that, as I have already told you, authority did not meddle with the question of the Canon until that question had pretty well settled itself; and, instead of that abstention weakening the authority of our sacred Books, the result has been that the great majority have far higher authority than if their claims rested on the decision of any Council, however venerable. They rest on the spontaneous consent of the whole Christian world, Churches the most remote agreeing independently to do honour to the same

Books. Some of the books which Mr. Hone printed, as left out by the compilers of the Canon, were not in existence at the time when that Canon established itself; and the best of the others is separated, in the judgment of any sober man, by a very wide interval from those which we account Canonical." *

This has been so long clearly seen and stated by the best writers on this subject that one, I may repeat, is astonished that there should be two opinions upon the matter. Dr. William Lee, in his lecture on "The Immemorial Doctrine of the Church of God," says that "even the most reluctant are forced to admit that the reception of the different parts of the New Testament as Scripture took place without external concert—from an inward impulse, as it were—at the same time and in the most different places; and that, with scarcely an exception, each writing which it contains was all at once, and without a word of doubt, placed on a level with the Old Testament, which had hitherto been regarded as exclusively Divine. In short, the authority conceded to this new component of the Scriptures, seems to have grown up without any one being able to place his finger upon the place, or the moment, when adhesion to it was first yielded." †

So far from the Councils picking out a number of books from a big collection of early Christian literature and decreeing that these were thenceforth to be regarded as sacred, the records of the Councils prove most conclusively that the collection had been made

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* *Ibid.*, pp. 226-228.

† *The Inspiration of Holy Scripture, its Nature and Proof*, pp. 48, 49.

long before, and was universally accepted. The first of the general Councils was summoned by Constantine. In this Emperor Christianity had conquered the enmity of Rome by the word of its testimony and its Christlike endurance. He had declared himself a Christian; and the power which had so long persecuted the Churches became their defender and patron. The Arian controversy had sprung up in Alexandria and was now rolling its waves over all lands. Constantine resolved to give peace to the Church. He called the bishops of the Churches to assemble at Nicæa, in Asia Minor, so that they might decide this controversy regarding the deity of the Lord Jesus. The great hall of the imperial palace was prepared for the meetings of this first Œcumenical, or "Universal," Council. Constantine, though the master of the world, recognised his position as a disciple of these masters in Israel. His seat, though of gold, was placed lower than those of the venerable men who were gathered round him. There was a lofty and gorgeous throne, however, in the midst of the assembly; but it was a throne on which no man sat. The throne was nevertheless occupied. The opened Gospels rested on it. That was the Council's declaration of its allegiance to God. They rejoiced in the presence among them of the world's Master—the first Christian Cæsar; but that throne, which rose on high above their seats and his, declared that he and they bowed before One whose authority was immeasurably greater than the Cæsar's. It was God's Word that was to rule, not man's. But all this meant that they *had* God's

Word, and that the New Testament was universally acknowledged as God's Word long before the first of the Councils had been brought together. This fact was dwelt upon by Constantine himself. In his address to the Council, he said: we "have the doctrine of the Holy Spirit in writing, for the Books of the Evangelists and Apostles, and the oracles of the ancient Prophets teach us clearly and thoroughly what we ought to believe concerning God. Wherefore let us lay aside all hostile contention, and let us decide our controversies from the Divinely Inspired Books."*

There is also another Imperial witness that the Churches possessed the New Testament before any Council had been summoned. In the month of February, 303, Diocletian, one of Constantine's immediate predecessors, issued the following decree: "The assembling of the Christians for the purpose of religious worship is to be forbidden. The Christian churches are to be pulled down and all copies of the Bible burned. Those who hold places of honour and rank must either abjure the faith or be degraded. In judicial proceedings the torture may be used against Christians, whatsoever their rank may be," etc. The possession of the New Testament Books was seen to be one reason, if not *the* reason, of the persistence of the Christian Church. From all this it is abundantly clear that we owe neither the collecting of the New Testament Books, nor the definition of their authority, to any Council. The Councils did not make the New

*Theodoret, i. 7.

Testament; but, on the contrary, the New Testament made the Councils. It was because the New Testament Books had been received, and because they continued to be regarded, as the Word of God, that Councils were summoned to enforce the Divine law which the New Testament Books declared.

CHAPTER III.

Is the Estimation, in which the Books of the New Testament were held, a Development?

THE Council of Nicæa, or Nice, met in the year 325, or two centuries and a quarter after the death of the Apostle John. The Gospel had been preached, therefore, for nearly 300 years before the first of the General Councils met. It must be admitted that there was space enough in that long interval for a development of belief, and even for the rise of superstition. It may be supposed, therefore, that, though the Christian men, who assembled at Nice to judge the Arian heresy, acknowledged the New Testament as the Word of God; and though they did not make the Canon, yet the Canon may have been made by some who preceded them. Leading men, in some previous age, may have picked out those Books from a multitude of others, and, having placed them together, may have set the example of seeking in them instruction and consolation. This example may have spread over the Churches. We all know how veneration deepens as time rolls on. What, then,

could be more natural than that these Books should finally be regarded as Divine, and should be enthroned in the Nicæan assembly as the very Word of God?

But the testimony of history is equally opposed to that explanation. The reverence for the New Testament Books is not a development. These Books were never regarded as ordinary productions. They were received, even at the first, as they were accepted at Nice, and as they have been accepted in the ages that followed that of the Council. Let me ask the reader to accompany me in a rapid excursion into that remote past, and to listen to the testimony of one and of another in the early Church. We shall begin with Pamphilus, a presbyter in the Church of Cæsarea who suffered martyrdom in the year 309. He was one of the scholars of the early Church, and had a long, useful, and distinguished career among the Christians in Palestine. His testimony is that of the latter half of the third century, and it is quite as emphatic as that which meets us in the beginning of the fourth century. Eusebius, the historian, so close a friend of his that the two were said to form but one soul, describes him as "a man of good understanding, a philosopher in word and deed," "my dearest friend," and "on account of his eminent virtue, the most renowned martyr of our age:" "he was especially eminent and remarkable above all men of our time," he continues, "for an unfeigned zeal for *the Holy Scriptures*." In another passage, quoted by Jerome, Eusebius says: "He not only lent out copies of *the sacred Scriptures* to be read, but cheerfully gave them

to be kept; and that not only to men, but to women likewise whom he found disposed to read. For which reason he took care to have by him many copies of the Scriptures that, when there should be occasion, he might furnish those who were willing to make use of them."*

Here we encounter the deepest reverence for the New Testament, and the fullest conviction of its value for the Christian life. It is placed on a level with the Old Testament, being plainly regarded as from the same Divine Author. Another writer, Victorinus, Bishop of Pettav in Germany, who lived a few years earlier than Pamphilus, likens, in a prolonged comparison, the four Gospels to the four forms of the cherubim described in the beginning of Ezekiel. In concluding his account, he says: "All these, though four, are but one, because they proceed from one mouth." He explains some words in the Book of Revelation, and adds: "They confute those who say that one spake in the prophets and another in the Gospel." In another passage he writes: "The teaching of the Old Testament is linked with that of the New Testament." Here the two parts of the Scriptures are declared to be one; and the "one mouth" from which the four Gospels proceed is, of course, that of the Spirit of God.

About 282, Theonas, bishop of Alexandria, wrote a letter to Lucian, chief chamberlain to the Roman Emperor, in which he describes the Gospels and Epistles as "the Divine Oracles of Christians," and

* For these and further testimonies see Lardner, *Works*, vols. ii. and iii.

advises that no day be allowed to pass without reading "the sacred Scriptures" and meditating upon them. Commodian, a still earlier writer, in quoting a passage from one of Paul's epistles, writes: "Paul, *or rather God by him*, says," etc. In referring to this writer, Lardner writes: "It is pleasing to observe the high respect for Scripture running through the writing of all early Christians in general."* Another early teacher of the same period, Dionysius, bishop of Rome, refers to the New Testament and to the Old in language whose reverence cannot be exceeded. He says: "The true disciples of Christ know very well that a Trinity is taught by *the Divine Scriptures*, but that neither the Old Testament nor the New teaches three Gods." For him, the Old Testament and the New constitute "*the Divine Scriptures*." Going back another thirty or forty years, and coming to Cyprian of Carthage (who died in 258 A.D.), we can detect no change. He refers to Acts xiii. in the following terms: "From Joshua the son of Nun to Samuel the judge and priest of God, according to the blessed apostle Paul, *who has taught by the Spirit of God*, were filled four hundred and fifty years;" and again: "All things which are delivered by the law and the prophets, the apostles and evangelists, we receive, and know, and reverence; but we enquire not further: nothing beyond them." We find Cyprian using also the same phrase which we have met with in these later writers: "the holy and Divine Scriptures."

Ascending still higher along the stream of time,

* *Works*, vol. iii., p. 135.

we come to Origen, the Egyptian Catechist, and one of the greatest scholars of Christian antiquity. This brings us to the opening years of the third century, that is, to a period about a century after the death of the Apostle John. He will tell us what his own convictions and the convictions of the Christians of his time were regarding the Books of the New Testament. Speaking of the variations in the Gospels, he describes it as the belief of the Christian Church "that the Gospels were written exactly according to truth, with the assistance of the Holy Spirit, and that the writers had made no mistakes." In the same discourse he asks, in reference to the statement in Mark x. 50, that the blind man "cast away his garment": "Shall we say that the evangelist wrote without thought, when he related the man's casting away his garment and leaping and coming to Jesus? And shall we dare to say that these things were inserted in the Gospels in vain? For my part," he adds, "I believe that not one jot or tittle of the Divine instructions is in vain."

Here are some other testimonies from the same pen. "We are never to say that there is anything impertinent or superfluous in the Scriptures of the Holy Spirit, though to some they may seem obscure: but we are to turn the eyes of our mind to Him who commanded these things to be written, and seek of Him the interpretation of them." He speaks of the Christians as persuaded "that the sacred books are not the writings of men, but have been written and delivered to us from the inspiration of the Holy

Spirit, by the will of the Father of all, through Jesus Christ." In a sermon on Jeremiah, he says: "If the oracles of God are contained in the law and the prophets, and in the gospels and the apostles, it becomes him who is instructed in the Divine oracles to own God for his teacher."* He thus expresses their unity of doctrine: "The same Spirit, proceeding from the one God, teaches the like things in the Scriptures written before the coming of Christ and in the gospels and apostles."

No estimate of the Scripture has ever been higher than that which finds its expression in those utterances; and this is the unvarying estimate of the ancient Church. Tertullian, who was born not later than 160 A.D., and who laboured in Africa at the end of the second and the beginning of the third centuries, speaks in like fervent manner regarding the New Testament. In a defence of the Christians, addressed to their Roman persecutors, he says: "Whoever of you . . . think that we have no concern for the safety of emperors, look into *the words of God, our Scriptures*, which we ourselves do not conceal, and many accidents bring into the way of those who are not of our religion. Know, then, that by these we are commanded, in abundance of goodness, to pray to God even for enemies, and to wish well to our persecutors (Matthew v. 44). And who are more enemies and persecutors of Christians than they against whom we are accused of treasonable practices? But, beside this, it is expressly and plainly said:

*In Jerem. Homily x.

'Pray for kings and for princes and powers that ye may live a quiet life' (1 Timothy ii. 1, 2)."* Here Tertullian appeals to a collection of writings, known as the Christian Scriptures; and the inference seems to be irresistible that these formed then one well-known Book, and, in other words, that the New Testament Canon was complete, with the exception of *Hebrews*, about which there was then temporary doubt in the West. This conclusion is powerfully sustained by the following: "Let the faction of Hermogenes," he writes, "show that this thing is written. If it be not written, let him fear the woe pronounced against them that add to or take from Scripture."† The Scripture, therefore, had long been complete. He quotes it, as we ourselves quote it now; and he used it as copiously as any modern writer has done. Rönsch, a recent German scholar, has collected Tertullian's Scripture quotations, and the result is a goodly-sized volume.

In the third century, which we have surveyed from its closing to its opening years, we have not found the slightest trace of development in the estimation in which the Scriptures of the New Testament are held. The Divine origin of the New Testament is as fervently admitted at the commencement as at the close. Let us now leave this age behind us and ask what views prevail in the second century of our era. Theophilus, bishop of Antioch, flourished about 181 A.D. Referring to 1 Tim. ii. 1, 2, he writes: "The Divine word moreover commands us to be subject to

* *Apol.*, c. 30. † *Contra Hermog.*, 22.

principalities and powers, and to pray for them, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life." He also says: "Christians have for their law-giver the true God, who teaches us to act righteously, godly, and honestly;" and he paraphrases 2 Peter i. 20, 21 as follows: "But men of God, filled with the Holy Ghost, and becoming prophets, inspired by God Himself, and being enlightened, were taught of God, and were holy and righteous. Wherefore they obtained the honour to become the instruments of God."*

Irenæus, bishop of Lyons, a still earlier witness, possesses the same Scriptures, and regards them with the like veneration. In a remarkable passage he emphasises the fact that in the New Testament Books we have all the light we possess or require regarding the way of life. He says: "We have not received the knowledge of the way of our salvation by any others than those by whom the gospel has been brought to us; which gospel they first preached, and afterwards by the will of God committed to writing, that it might be for time to come the foundation and pillar of our faith. . . . For after that our Lord rose from the dead, and they (the Apostles) were endued from above with the power of the Holy Ghost coming down upon them, they received a perfect knowledge of all things."† Dealing with some passages in Paul's epistle to the Romans, he says: "For he, foreseeing by the Spirit, that there would be divisions caused by evil teachers. . . spake after this manner." Quoting Matthew i. 18,

*See Lardner, *Works*, ii., pp. 211-214. † *Adv. Hær.*, iii, 1.

he argues: "But the Holy Spirit, foreseeing there would be deceivers, and guarding beforehand against their deceit, says by Matthew: 'Now the birth of Christ was on this wise;'" and in another place: "Well knowing that the Scriptures are perfect, as being dictated by the Word of God and His Spirit." And he adds: "A heavy punishment awaits those who add to, or take from, the Scriptures."

Here also, then, we look in vain for any trace of development in the estimate of the Books of the New Testament. They are viewed as a unity—as a completed statement of the will of God; and they are received as God's own revelation of His will. A comparatively recent discovery has shown how completely the New Testament was accepted before the middle of the second century. It was known that Tatian had compiled a harmony of the Gospels about the year 160. Those who maintained that the Gospel of John was not written by the Apostle, but was a late production, endeavoured to explain away this awkward fact. But the book, which had been long lost, was recovered some years ago. Tatian's Diatessaron ("one from four"), or Harmony, *begins with the opening words of John's Gospel.* Within forty years, therefore, after John's death, all four Gospels had been received by the Churches scattered over at least the eastern portion of the Roman empire; and Christians had been even then so fully and so long acquainted with them that a book, which would blend their testimony into one continuous narrative, was felt to be desirable.

CHAPTER IV.

Is the Estimation, in which the Books of the New Testament were held, a Development? *(Continued.)*

SIMILAR indications of the early existence and use of the New Testament Books are encountered as we approach still nearer the commencement of the Christian era. Justin Martyr, a native of the town of Sichem in Samaria, after having studied in various schools of philosophy, became acquainted with Christianity and embraced it as "the only certain and useful philosophy." He was known as a writer on Christianity as early as 140 A.D. He tells us that the Gospels were read on the Lord's Day in the Christian gatherings. These Gospels were at that time not only in the hands of believers, but were also read by unbelievers. In one of his works—A Dialogue with Trypho, a Jew—Justin represents Trypho as saying: "I am sensible that the precepts in your Gospel, as it is called, are so great and wonderful, that I think it impossible for any man to keep them. For I have been at the pains to read them." There are references in those of Justin's genuine writings which have come down to us, to all the four Gospels, to the Acts, to the Epistles, including that to the Hebrews and 2 Peter, and to the Book of Revelation.

But we are able, in the providence of God, to mount still higher along the line of historic testimony, and to plant our feet on the very border line between the Apostolic age and after times. Eusebius states that in his time five books were in existence, which had been written by Papias, who flourished about the year 113 A.D. Irenæus tells us that Papias was a hearer of John and a companion of Polycarp, to whom I shall refer immediately. Papias himself informs us that he had conversed with the daughters of Philip the Evangelist. He not only had the four Gospels, but even gives us his notions as to how these originated. He refers also to 1 Peter, 1 John, and Revelation. These references may be accepted as a plain intimation that in his time there was already a collection of the New Testament Books of which he and his readers were diligent students. There is an expression which he uses in speaking of the Gospel of Matthew, which has been strangely misunderstood, but which is an eloquent testimony to the place then assigned to the New Testament Scripture by the Christian Church. He believed that this Gospel had been originally written in Hebrew; but, instead of using the term "Gospel," so familiar to the Churches afterwards, he speaks of it as the *logia* of Matthew. The scholarship of our time shows a touching reverence for "authorities," and even the blunders of a leading scholar are accepted and repeated with unquestioning confidence. In this way only is one able to explain how the *logia* are now almost universally spoken of as "the sayings," or "the discourses" of Matthew.

The word has no such meaning, and has been confounded with a similar Greek term. The *Logia* of Matthew are not "the discourses," but "THE DIVINE ORACLES" of Matthew. The use of this term by Papias is a confession that before the close of the first century, the Gospels were universally accepted by the Churches as "the Oracles of God."

Eusebius, speaking of the Christian Church during the reign of the Emperor Trajan, and basing his remarks upon documents which have not come down to us, says: "Among those who were illustrious at that time was Quadratus, who, together with the daughters of Philip, is said to have enjoyed the gift of prophecy. And, beside these, there were at that time many other eminent persons, who had the first rank in the succession of the Apostles; who, being the worthy disciples of such men, everywhere built up the Churches, the foundations of which had been laid by the Apostles; extending likewise their preaching yet farther, and scattering abroad the salutary seeds of the Kingdom of Heaven all over the world. For many of the disciples of that time, whose souls the Divine Word had inspired with an ardent love of philosophy, first fulfilled our Saviour's precept, distributing their substance to the necessitous; then, travelling abroad, they performed the work of evangelists, being ambitious to preach Christ, and deliver the Scripture of the Divine Gospels."*

The reign of Trajan extended from 98 A.D. to 117 A.D. In this early period, therefore, the Gospels

* *Hist. Eccl.*, iii. 37.

were in existence and were recognised as authoritative and Divine. "I think it must be allowed," says Lardner,* "that he (Eusebius) was fully persuaded that before the end of the reign of Trajan, who died in 117, the Gospels were well known, and collected together; and they who preached the doctrine of Christ to those who had not heard it, carried the Gospels with them and delivered them to their converts. They must, therefore, have been before this for some time in use, and in the highest esteem in the Churches planted by the Apostles. It must have been no difficult thing at that time to know the genuineness of writings which were of so great authority with them. And certainly they were well assured of it, or they had not so highly esteemed them."

Two others, whose labours and steadfastness as martyrs left enduring memories behind them, have shed precious light upon the time which followed immediately upon the days of the Apostles. In a letter which Irenæus wrote to one Florinus, who had turned aside from the truth, he makes the following reference to Polycarp. "I saw you, when I was very young," he says, "in the Lower Asia with Polycarp. For I better remember the affairs of that time than those which have lately happened; the things which we learn in our childhood growing up with the soul, and uniting themselves to it. Insomuch that I can tell the place in which the blessed Polycarp sat and taught, and his going out and coming in, and the

* Vol. ii., p. 115.

manner of his life, and the form of his person, and the discourses he made to the people; and how he related his conversation with John and others who had seen the Lord; and how he related their sayings, and what he had heard from them concerning the Lord; both concerning His miracles and His doctrine, as he had received them from the eye-witnesses of the Word of Life, all which Polycarp related agreeably to the Scriptures. These things I then, through the mercy of God toward me, diligently heard and attended to, recording them not on paper, but upon my heart. And through the grace of God I continually renew the remembrance of them."

Polycarp's martyrdom is now believed to have taken place in the year 155 A.D.* He declared before the Roman Proconsul that he had served Christ eighty and six years. Some have supposed that this refers to the period during which he had been bishop of Smyrna, others to the time which had elapsed since his conversion, and others again to the entire period of his natural life. The second interpretation is no doubt to be preferred; but even, if we adopt the last, Polycarp's birth takes us back to the year 69 A.D. He was, therefore, at the lowest calculation 31 years old when the Apostle John died, and a dozen years or more of his Christian life must have been passed before the end of the first century. This takes us right back into the Apostolic times. What, then, have Polycarp and the age in which he lives to say of the Scriptures of the New Testament?

* Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, Part ii., vol. i., p. 653.

He refers to Books of the New Testament as already well known. He asks in his letter to the Church at Philippi: "Do we not know that the saints shall judge the world, as Paul teaches?" This is a reference to 1 Corinthians vi. 3, and the manner in which it is referred to plainly implies that this epistle was received as part of the Word of God. And that the New Testament Books *were* received and used as Scripture even then is abundantly clear from the following passage in the same letter: "For I trust that ye are well exercised in the Holy Scriptures—As in these Scriptures it is said: 'Be ye angry and sin not.' And 'Let not the sun go down upon your wrath.'" This is a quotation from Ephesians iv. 26. He also distinctly sets the Apostle Paul upon a level that is far above his own. Writing still to the same Church, he says: "For neither I, nor any one like me, can come up to the wisdom of the blessed and renowned Paul, who, when absent, wrote to you an epistle into which, if you look, you will be able to edify yourselves in the faith which has been delivered to you."

The other witness who takes us back into the Apostolic times is Ignatius, who also sealed his testimony with his blood. His martyrdom took place about 110 A.D., and he was made bishop of Antioch in the year 69, that is, within forty years after the death of our Lord. In his letter to the Philadelphians he writes, as he is on his way to die: "I cling to the Gospel as the flesh of Christ, and to the Apostles as the presbyters of the Church. Yes,

and we love the prophets also, because they foretold the Gospel and awaited the coming of Christ."* Here the New Testament is referred to as consisting of two parts—the Gospel and the Apostles. Even in the time of Ignatius, therefore, the New Testament Books were received as Scripture, were collected together, and were apparently classified as we have them now.

According to Lightfoot† there are references in Polycarp's epistle to eighteen Books of the New Testament, including the Epistle to the Hebrews. In the genuine letters of Ignatius, every Book of the New Testament is referred to with the exception of 2 Thessalonians, 2 John, Jude, and Revelation. It might well have been concluded, therefore, that the acceptance of the New Testament as God's Word, even in apostolic times, is fully demonstrated. Prof. Rendel Harris, speaking of the totally unexpected recovery of Tatian's Diatessaron, which I have already mentioned, writes: "There are few people, as yet, who realise how revolutionary this discovery has been in the question of the genuineness and authenticity of the New Testament records, and how many idle criticisms it has silenced."‡ But, as if to meet the confident gainsaying of our time, recent years have furnished still ampler testimony. The same writer says: "Some days since, as I was examining a list of patristic authorities, which a modern scholar had indicated as necessary ground to be worked over

* Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, Part ii., vol. ii., p. 259. † *Ibid.*, pp. 1,107-1,116
‡ *The Newly Recovered Gospel of St. Peter*, p. 8

in search of non-canonical parallels to the Christian Gospels, my attention was caught by the large proportion of the material cited which had become known within the last three years; for, while there were a number of authorities referred to whose contents have been known from very early times, it would be no exaggeration to say that more than half the books in question had seen the light, either wholly or in part, within the last five-and-twenty years." *

For these results we are largely indebted to Prof. Rendel Harris himself, and to his industrious fellow-labourers. Eusebius and Jerome mention an Apology for the Christians presented to the Emperor Adrian by Aristides, an Athenian philosopher. Jerome adds that Justin Martyr in his Apology had imitated that of Aristides. This is important, as it fixes the high antiquity of the latter work. But beyond these references there was no further information regarding it obtainable. The loss of this work was naturally the subject of deep regret, as it carried us back to sometime between 124 A.D. and 140 A.D. But, thanks to the enterprise of the Professor, this precious relic has now been recovered. He found, in one of the seldom-visited libraries of the Convent of St. Catherine, at Mount Sinai, a translation of this long-lost Apology. It has often been said that the doctrine of the Deity of our Lord is a comparatively late development. That will no longer be maintained by any honest man who is acquainted with this new evidence. "The Christians," says Aristides, "reckon

* Pages 3, 4.

the beginning of their religion from Jesus Christ, who is named the Son of God most High; and it is said that God came down from heaven, and from a Hebrew virgin took and clad Himself with flesh, and in a daughter of man there dwelt the Son of God. This is taught," he adds, "from that Gospel which a little while ago was spoken among them as being preached; *wherein if ye also will read*, ye will comprehend the power that is upon it."

The Gospels were accordingly in the possession of Aristides and of the Christian Church, and they could have been obtained by the Emperor. There are other and similar references to the New Testament. "Now the Christians, O king," he writes, "by going about and seeking have found the truth; and as we have comprehended from their writings, they are nearer to the truth and to exact knowledge than the rest of the people." "Truly," he says in another place, "this is a new people, and there is something Divine mingled with it. *Take now their writings and read in them;* and lo! ye will find that not of myself have I brought these things forward, nor as their advocate have I said them, but *as I have read in their writings*, these things I firmly believe, and those things which are to come." And again: "Let all those then approach to the gateway of light who do not know God, and let them receive *incorruptible words, those which are so always and from eternity;* let them, therefore, anticipate the dread judgment which is to come by Jesus the Messiah upon the whole race of men." Here it is impossible not to see that the

New Testament was already in existence, was the acknowledged source of enlightenment, and that its words were then commended even to an Emperor as "incorruptible words, which are so always and from eternity." That testimony takes us back to the very commencement of the second century. It proves that the canon of the New Testament had settled itself, and that the belief in the absolute incorruptibleness and inspiration of the Scriptures is no development, but was the doctrine of the Apostolic time.

That discovery was made in 1889. In 1892, Mrs. Lewis and her sister, Mrs. Gibson, visited the same convent, and made a further discovery. In examining one of the manuscripts, she noticed that underneath the writing there lay an earlier one in red ink. Some monk in the eighth century had used this ancient manuscript to write upon the vellum a history of some female saints. The older writing, which was still readable, proved to be an early—the earliest, indeed, which we now possess—Syriac version of the Gospels. Canon Cureton had previously discovered fragments of a Syriac translation which corresponded with Tatian's Harmony, and was consequently proved to be not later than 120 A.D. But a closer study of Mrs. Lewis's version shows that this was a translation *which had been set aside by the Curetonian.* Cerinthus, a heretic who lived in the Apostolic period, and who denied the Incarnation, had founded a sect, which, like every other, was eager to propagate its special doctrines. It had sought to do this by corrupting the Scripture. There is evidence that the Curetonian

version had this spurious translation in view. This attempt to adulterate the Word of God must consequently be older than 120 A.D., and the genuine Gospels older again than it. This takes us right into the first century. The New Testament Canon had made itself even then, and was esteemed the rule of faith and life.

A discovery made in Egypt by the French Archæological Mission, and published also in 1892, has yielded equally forcible testimony from another side. There was another early sect, the Docetæ, who denied the Lord's true humanity, as the Cerinthians denied His true Deity. They pursued similar tactics, and published a Gospel which was represented as being that of St. Peter. Among the manuscripts discovered by the French Mission was a fragment of this long-lost work. It embraces the latter part of the Gospel History, from the washing of Pilate's hands to the return of the disciples to Galilee after the resurrection. It contains about 1,600 words. It is really a harmony of the Gospels, with slight alterations and additions to maintain the views of the sect. It quotes from the Gospel of John and from each of the other three. We know, from a statement by Eusebius, that Serapion, Bishop of Antioch, found copies of this work extant in 190 A.D. Its composition must have taken place before—probably long before—that time. Justin Martyr, the teacher and friend of Tatian, quotes from it. This takes us probably up to 120 A.D. The four Gospels were, therefore, already in the possession of the Churches

by the end of the first century. It is a striking fact that all these discoveries, without exception, have been directly opposed to the theories of rationalism, and have confirmed more conclusively the correctness of the constant belief of the Christian Church. Harnack has openly acknowledged the defeat of his party. "There was," he says, "a time—the general public indeed have not got beyond it—in which the oldest Christian literature, including the New Testament, was looked upon as a tissue of deceptions and forgeries. That time is passed. For science it was an episode in which it learned much, and after which it has much to forget. . . The oldest literature of the Church in all main points and most details, is genuine and trustworthy, from the standpoint of literary criticism. . . . The chronological succession in which tradition has arranged the original documents of Christianity is, in all essential points, from the epistles of St. Paul to the writings of Irenæus, correct, and compels the historian to keep clear of all hypotheses concerning the course of events which conflict with this succession."

Summing up now the results of our inquiry, what is our finding? We have seen that in the fourth century the New Testament was enthroned in the midst of the Council of Nicæa as the authority to which emperor and bishops had alike to bow. We have gone back into the third century and have inquired whether this collection of Books is regarded with less reverence there; and the reverence is as deep as in the fourth. We passed up into the second century

and looked for traces of growth in this estimate of the New Testament Scriptures; and we have found none. We have, last of all, gone right up into Apostolic times and asked whether there, before the collection is completed, and while the ink, so to say, is scarcely dry upon the sacred page, there is any lessened reverence. We have listened to the men who knew the Apostles, and whose estimate is the estimate of the time when the Books were written and handed to the Churches. We have asked *them* whether these Books as they are then received are regarded as ordinary literature; and the answer has been an emphatic "No." These Books were never placed on a level with the other books of their time. They were received from the very first day of their existence as a fountain of heavenly grace, a source of Divine light. They were to the men of the Apostolic times what they have been to Christian men of after ages, and what they are to us now—the Word of God. In other words, the notion that the Books of the New Testament were first of all regarded as ordinary literature, and then, as advancing time encircled the memory of the Apostles with a halo of glory, were reverenced as sacred, is a dream. And, if we are to tell the whole truth, we must go farther and say that it is worse than a dream. It is a baseless slander upon that which is the highest of all God's earthly gifts, save the gift of His Son.

CHAPTER V.

The Claims made by the New Testament Writers.

IT is by this time perfectly clear that the veneration of the New Testament as the Word of God is not a late growth. It was the conviction of the Apostolic Church. The Books were received from the first as the Divine Oracles. But the question which has occupied us throughout the last two chapters is now exchanged for another. This estimation in which these Books are held is not a development. It was there unchanged, and unchallenged, at the very beginning. How are we to account for this? If this position was claimed for them by the writers, we should understand the matter at once. If the Books were handed to the Churches by Apostolic hands as gifts from God; if they were given over to them, not as men's words, but as His, then the very faith begotten in those believers by the Spirit of God would have ensured the devout reception of these writings as part of the Sacred Scriptures. Was this declaration made? Were the Books thus handed as a sacred trust to the Churches?

It might be argued from the reverence with which the New Testament writings were received in the Apostolic times that this assurance *must* have been

given. How else could it be there, and how else could it have been suffered to continue there without being rebuked? It might also have happened that no other way than this of answering our question was left to us. For the assurance might very well have been given verbally and in the course of the personal ministry of the Apostles. But Providentially more was done than this. The claim is embedded in the Books. Luke, for example, gives us an account of the origin of his Gospel in a passage which suffers from an unhappy rendering. His opening words are these: "Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, even as they delivered them to us who from the beginning were eye-witnesses and ministers of the word, it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things *from the very first (anōthen)*, to write unto thee, most excellent Theophilus, that thou mightest know the certainty of those things wherein thou hast been instructed."

Reading the words hastily, we might conclude that they imply that the third Gospel had a purely natural origin. The thought, we might imagine, occurred to Luke that he too, knowing so much, might also write an account of the life and sayings of the Lord Jesus. But that is an interpretation which will not bear reflection. Why should he have entered a field which was already so fully and so well occupied? The narratives already in existence, he tells us, were numerous. And they were orderly histories—they

had undertaken "to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us." They were also accurate. They were faithful reports of the Apostolic teaching—"even as they delivered them unto us who from the first were eye-witnesses and ministers of the Word."

There seems, therefore, to have been no reason for disturbing these accounts which had already occupied the field unless Luke was charged to bring something that was still better and *that was authoritative.* And that this is what he brings, we shall be convinced if we read on. He has knowledge which none of these unaided writers has possessed. He describes himself as "having had *perfect* understanding," and as "having had perfect understanding of ALL things." This is surely an immense claim! There is absolutely nothing which Luke does not know, and there is nothing which he does not know accurately! It is impossible to add to his information, or to correct him in the smallest matter! Notice, too, what it is that he is going to give to Theophilus, and through him to give to us in common with all believers. It is not that Theophilus is to be made acquainted with new facts. No doubt there would be some things in this Gospel new to him; but these are not referred to. Theophilus has already had information; but there was one important question which must have made itself heard from time to time. Were those things certain? Could the information which he had received be absolutely depended upon? It is that question which Luke is now to answer. "It seemed good to me," he says, "to write unto

thee, most excellent Theophilus, in order that thou mightest know—with the intent that thou mightest know—THE CERTAINTY of those things wherein thou hast been instructed."

Let the reader once more mark the words. It is not so much information which Luke is going to give. The others had already given that. But he brings what the others did not give, and could not give—assurance of the absolute truth of the things already made known to Theophilus. Now, if Luke is going to be the medium through whom One shall speak that "cannot lie," and to Whom no frailty of misapprehension clings—if he is going to give the words of One whose every word is truth—we can appreciate the value of the gift which he brings; and we can understand why, at the very commencement of his Gospel, he contrasts this record of his with the uninspired accounts already in existence. And that this is the meaning of his words would have been abundantly plain but for the translation to which I have already referred. Luke is made to say both in the Revised and in the Authorised Versions that he has "had perfect understanding of all things *from the very first;*" whereas what he does really say is that he has "had perfect understanding of all things FROM ON HIGH." Dr. John Lightfoot, in his "Hebrew and Talmudical Exercitations upon St. Luke," has, two and a-half centuries ago, shown the superiority of the rendering given here.* The word *anōthen*, which is here rendered in our version, "from the very first," is used in the sense of "from above"

* *Collected Works* (Pitman's Edition), vol. xii.

again and again in the New Testament itself. "Every good gift and every perfect gift," says James (i. 17), "is *anōthen*," that is, "is from above." Twice again he uses the word, and both times in the same sense. He speaks of "the wisdom which is *anōthen*," "from above." It occurs twice in John's Gospel with the same meaning: "He that cometh *anōthen*—from above—is above all" (iii. 31); and "Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no power at all against Me, except it were given thee *anōthen*—from above" (xix. 11). It is quite true that the word is used in the sense of "from the beginning" in Acts xxvi. 5, but why should we deny to it its more usual sense here—a sense which is demanded by the plain intention of the words?

But even apart from this necessary correction, the reader will see that this Gospel is handed to Theophilus and to the Churches through him as containing—what no mere human composition could contain—absolute assurance as to the truth of the Gospel history. It, therefore, took a position at once as an authoritative record of the Lord's life and words. It has surprised some that none of those praiseworthy, but unaided, attempts to inform the Churches regarding the Lord's life and ministry has survived. But their disappearance is fully explained by this preface to Luke's Gospel. When the Churches were supplied with *the inspired* Gospels, the others would at once be dispensed with. No believer would think of putting man's book on a level with the gift of the Spirit—"the oracles of God."

There are two significant statements in Paul's

epistles regarding the character of the inspired addresses which he and the other Apostles delivered to the Churches. Writing to the Thessalonians (1 Thess. ii. 13) he says: "For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the Word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the Word of God, which effectually worketh also in you who believe." Here the claim is made that the word delivered to them was not "the word of men"—and, therefore, not the word of Paul or Peter or John—but "as it is in truth—THE WORD OF GOD." The reader will also note that this was the impression which Paul's communication made at the very outset. The Christians at Thessalonica did not require to be told that it was God's Word and not man's word. They recognised and owned it as God's own message to them.

How far the inspiration of God's Spirit extended, and in how full a sense the message was God's word, the Apostle shows when writing to the Corinthians. "Now we have received," he says, "not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things which are freely given us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but (in the words) which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual" (that is, interpreting spiritual things with spiritual words) [1 Cor. ii. 12, 13]. Here the Apostle ascribes the things which he has communicated, or, as we should say, the thoughts or

the ideas, directly to the inspiration of the Spirit of God. But he also does more. He ascribes the very forms of statement which he uses to the inspiration of the Spirit. And he adds the reason for this extension of the Spirit's influence. The Spirit's thoughts, he says, have to be clothed with the Spirit's words. If that were not done, man might err in their expression, and the communication sent to us from God would thus be marred. He, therefore, conveys the truth given to him by the Spirit, he says, not in statements fashioned by human wisdom, but in the statements taught by the Spirit. He thus interprets, he adds, the things of the Spirit by the words of the Spirit. Is it conceivable, then, that writings placed in the hands of believing men with such a description as that—writings whose very language is Divine—could ever have been placed upon the level of the ordinary literature of the period? They must necessarily have been accepted as Scripture from the first.

We have besides two indications that the Books of the New Testament were placed, as a matter of course, by the side of the Books of the Old Testament. The term Scripture *(graphē)* occurs about fifty times in the New Testament, and in every case it refers to the acknowledged oracles of God—the Divinely inspired writings. Bearing this in mind, the significance of the following passage will at once be seen. Peter, in his second Epistle (iii. 15, 16), thus exhorts us: "Account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given unto him,

hath written unto you. As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also THE OTHER SCRIPTURES, to their own destruction." Here the expression—"According to the wisdom *given unto him*" will be noticed. It was wisdom which was entrusted to him that he communicated to the Churches. It will also be observed that, when Peter penned these words, a large number of Epistles—"all his epistles"—had been written by Paul, and were in the hands of the Christian community. But the special point, to which I ask the reader's attention, is the rank which Peter assigns to these letters of the Apostle Paul. He classes them in that expression, "as they do also the other Scriptures," with the Sacred Oracles; or, to speak more correctly, he places the Oracles of God by the side of the letters of Paul, his own contemporary! The Books of the Old Testament and such others of the New Testament as were then in existence—all these are "the other Scriptures," having an equally lofty place, but no higher place, than the Epistles of Paul.

This immediate recognition, and complete acceptance, of the New Testament Books is shown also in a reference by Paul to a passage in the Gospel of Luke. In 1 Tim. v. 18, after commanding that the need of those who labour in word and doctrine should be generously ministered to, he adds: "For the Scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn, and, The labourer is

worthy of his reward." Now, the only place in the entire Bible in which these last words occur is in Luke x. 7. That Gospel was, therefore, already in use among the Churches; and it was recognised by them as no less Scripture than the Old Testament from which the first quotation is made (Deut. xxv. 4). Paul does not need to contend that the statement in Luke is part of the Word of God. It is universally admitted to be so. No one dreams that the suggestion is possible that its position as Scripture requires to be vindicated.

Quite in keeping with this high claim for the Books which they handed to the Churches was the care of the New Testament writers that nothing should enter into these writings that was not the Spirit's distinct message. An illustration of this fidelity is found in the seventh chapter of 1 Corinthians. The Church at Corinth had written to the Apostle desiring special directions in circumstances which they specified. It was not God's will that these directions should be given by Divine authority. God gives great guiding principles, but He does not multiply commandments. These principles, easily grasped, and increasingly understood and admired and loved as they are obeyed, are an education to the spirit of man. They are light in whose growing brightness the heart rejoices. But a multiplicity of directions would extinguish the light. An over-loaded memory would be substituted for an enlightened and free judgment.

These Corinthians were as yet, however, but babes

in Christ. They had just escaped from Greek pollution and darkness, and they needed to be taken by the hand and led along until their eyes should become accustomed to the light. And so, while he has no Divine command to give them, Paul is permitted to guide them by his own judgment. *But this is carefully explained.* Whatever is not *God's* Word is clearly marked off from that which is the Word of God. In verse 6 he writes: "But I speak this by permission and not of commandment"; verse 10: "And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord"; verse 12: "But to the rest speak I, not the Lord"; again in verse 25: "Now concerning virgins I have no commandment of the Lord; yet I give my judgment, as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful"; and the whole concludes (verse 40) with the following: "But she is happier if she so abide, after my judgment: and I think also that I have the Spirit of God." The reader will observe how unusual this note of hesitancy is in the Scripture. It stands alone. We may search through Book after Book and not find a like passage. A great deal is said to-day about "the human element" in the Scripture; and what the phrase is intended to convey is not that man co-operated with God in conveying to us a wholly Divine message; but that part of the Bible is man's word, and some other portion of it is God's Word. Now, here is enough to supply correction for that notion. For, while we have an undoubted "human element," the human portion is carefully marked off from the other. It is

limited and accurately defined. It is marked, too, as human by hesitation and timidity, which tell us that the Divine Spirit is temporarily withdrawn, and that the human spirit fears and trembles as it stands alone and forsaken for the moment in the holy place. When the Spirit returns, the old, full note is at once resumed, and every trace of trembling and of hesitation has vanished. The very confidence and decision which are so strongly characteristic of the Scriptures are, therefore, another claim to Divine authority; and it is one which pervades the Bible from Genesis to Revelation.

CHAPTER VI.

How the Canon was Formed.

IT will now be understood that the conclusion to which those have come, who have investigated the facts, namely, that the Canon made itself, is abundantly justified. The notion that the adoption of these Books was the result of ecclesiastical intrigue or compulsion cannot be entertained by any competent investigator. Speaking of the latter part of the second century, Dr. Theodore Zahn says: "The expressions of the writers of this generation render it impossible to hold that this collection of books of public edification had only arisen in the lifetime of Irenæus, and put an end to some previous

state of chaos. The Church had no organs or modes of administration at that time capable of dislodging books introduced into Divine worship or replacing them in the autonomous provincial congregations with such uniform effect. Had all the various bishops united in the conspiracy, such a *coup d' état* would, nevertheless, have foundered on the stubborn rock of provincial independence. In any case, a conflict would have been kindled round the New Testament more lasting, and leaving deeper traces on ecclesiastical history, than any battles about Easter or the 'new prophets.'" And, he adds, that "it is an assured fact that, about the years 80—110 A.D., both the four-fold Gospel and the body of thirteen Pauline Epistles were in existence, and had been introduced into the Divine worship of the congregations gathered out of heathenism along the whole line from Antioch to Rome." *

The only tenable explanation of this wide-spread and unquestoning acceptance of the New Testament Scripture is, that the Churches treasured it from the first as Divine. As the Books were given, they were received, "not as the word of man, but, as they are in truth, the Word of God." The New Testament did not attain its high place because a number of leading men among the early Christians agreed to give it that place. The place was assumed by each Book as it was handed to the Churches by the inspired writer. "The primitive Church," says Gaussen, "during her militant and triumphant march through the first half century of her existence, saw

* *Grundriss der Geschichte des N. T. Kanons* (1901), pp. 26, 40.

her New Testament Canon forming in her hand, as a nosegay is formed in the hand of a lady walking through plots of flowers, with the proprietor of the garden by her side. As she advances, the latter presents to her flower after flower, till she finds herself in possession of an entire bunch. And, just as the nosegay attracts admiring attention before it is filled up, and as soon as the first few flowers have been put together, so the New Testament Canon began to exist for the Christian Church from the moment the earliest portions of the inspired Scriptures had been put into her hands."*

A fact, which has been a source of trouble to some minds, forms a striking testimony to the correctness of what has just been said. The whole of the New Testament seems to have been written within the last sixty years of the first century. At the commencement of this period the number of Churches and of believers was comparatively small, and these opening years of the Church's long and troubled life were, on the whole, peaceful. But towards the end of the first century the conditions were completely changed. The Churches had been vastly multiplied, and they were being overwhelmed with trouble. The Books written in the earlier part of the period, when the Churches were fewer and were in quietness, we should expect to have been received at once and universally. Those written in the latter part of the time would have greater difficulty in obtaining universal recognition, seeing that the Churches were more widely spread abroad,

* *The Canon of the Holy Scriptures*, p. 15.

and that communication between them must have been carried on with difficulty. Now this is just what happened. The Books, which were written at the beginning, were universally received. These were the four Gospels, The Acts of the Apostles, the thirteen Epistles of Paul, the First Epistle of Peter, and the First Epistle of John. The Epistle to the Hebrews and the Book of Revelation (which, though written late, and probably last of all, came from the last of the Apostles, on whom all eyes were fixed) were universally received among the Eastern Churches at the beginning, and were only questioned afterwards in certain quarters, because of the use made of them in opposition to views then generally entertained. The other epistles—James, Jude, 2 Peter, 2 John, and 3 John were questioned. That they were questioned shows with what jealous care the sacred oracles were guarded by the Churches. And it proves also, as Zahn has pointed out, how impossible it is to believe that any Council had settled the Canon. "Most incomprehensible of all would it be," he says, "that after some official proceedings had settled the matter, the several Churches, without asking or knowing anything about one another, should have, in some cases, read James or Hebrews as Scripture, but in others fully ignored them." * When, however, the representatives of the Churches met at Nicæa and elsewhere, after the long storm through which the Churches had passed, all questioning ceased. Those Churches, which had received these letters from the hands of the

* *Grundriss der Geschichte des N. T. Kanons*, p. 27.

Apostles, were then able to testify to their genuineness, and thus every doubt was stilled.

CHAPTER VII.

Have we the Original New Testament?

WE have now noted how the Canon of the New Testament was formed. We have seen that the separation of these Books from all the other literature of the time was due to the witness borne to them at the first. They came as from God's own hand. But when that question is answered, we are confronted by another. Do we now possess the Books as they were originally given? We have not a single autograph of evangelist or apostle. Every letter sent to the Churches by Paul, and Peter, and James, and Jude, and John, has perished: not a single original Gospel has survived. We have only copies of them—or rather copies of copies which themselves had been transcribed from still older copies. In this repeated copying, mistakes may have been, or rather must have been, made and transmitted. What assurance, then, have we that the New Testament of to-day is the New Testament of the Apostolic age?

However disquieting this question may be, it is perfectly natural and legitimate. But, like many another fear, it owes its force to ignorance. We have already seen how carefully even the ordinary classics have been copied, and that the fears of scholars themselves,

as to the corruptions which were supposed to have crept in, have proved to be largely unfounded. How exaggerated the fear has been, in the case of the New Testament, has been shown long ago. There is no other book in the world of which so many copies have been written out. These belong to many ages and to many countries. We have, in all, about 4,000 copies of gospels, epistles, &c., one of them as old as 350 A.D.; others of the fifth and sixth centuries; and the rest extending thence to the time when the printing-press was substituted for the copyist's pen. Now, this enormous number of manuscripts, made by so many different hands, and in circumstances which varied so greatly, has insured the safety of the original text. This will be plain if I borrow an apt illustration. Let me suppose that a merchant has written a long and important letter. A number of his correspondents are concerned in the transaction, and the same letter has to be sent to each. As time is short, one of his clerks reads the letter aloud in the outer office, and a dozen of the others make each a copy of the document.

The merchant sends his own letter to the post as soon as the work of copying is finished. But before sending off the others, he concludes that he had better glance over them to see that they are correct. His attention is arrested by a statement which he finds in the first which he has taken up. A certain class of goods is to be supplied, says this letter, at seven pounds a ton. He had meant to say ten pounds a ton, and he immediately asks himself whether the

mistake was his, or is it the blunder of one of the copyists. His own letter is gone and he cannot consult that. But he snatches up another copy. It reads "ten pounds a ton." He takes up a third, it also reads "ten pounds a ton." It is the reading, in short, of all the rest. Can we wonder that he at once concludes that he had made no mistake? He knows that any man may make a mistake; but he is also aware that it is improbable that two men will make the same mistake, still more improbable that three, and quite impossible that eleven, will unite in perpetrating the same blunder. Consequently, he is quite at rest about the ten pounds a ton. He knows that this must have been in the original letter, and that the "seven pounds a ton" is the mistake of the clerk who made that erroneous copy.

Such, then, is the security given to us by these manuscripts, to which we have to add quotations from the New Testament in early writers from the early years of the second century downwards, as well as early translations of the New Testament from the Greek into Latin, Syriac, and other tongues. There have been thousands of copyists, and, as we shall see immediately, there have been hosts of variations. But, nevertheless, the safety of the original Scriptures, which they all united to hand down to us, lies in the very multitude of these manuscripts. Every one of these copyists may have made—we may assuredly go farther and say, he has made—some blunders. But they will be *his own blunders*, and not the blunders of another copyist.

There is also another fact, a knowledge of which at once allays apprehension. A huge proportion of the 150,000 variations, presented by this array of manuscripts, is so plainly the result of individual mistakes that they are brushed aside without the slightest misgiving. They are also, besides, of the most trivial kind. Isaac Taylor, in his *History of the Transmission of Ancient Books*, says: "Out of a hundred thousand various readings in the text of the New Testament, it would be hard to select 100 which an English reader would think important to the sense of the passages where they occur. And in that 100, there would not be more than one or two which can in any way affect questions of fact, of doctrine, or of practice." *

Such is the testimony which has been uniformly given by those most fully acquainted with the facts; and it is testimony which ought long since to have swept away fear, and to have ended misrepresentation. Let me ask the reader's attention to the assurances of other competent witnesses. I select three. Speaking of the growing agreement of scholars, with regard to the original text, Dr. Scrivener writes: "But even were the progress of the science less hopeful than we believe it to be, one great truth is admitted on all hands—the almost complete freedom of Holy Scripture from the bare suspicion of wilful corruption, the absolute identity of every known copy in respect to doctrine, and spirit, and the main drift of every argument and every narrative

* Page 246.

through the entire volume of Inspiration. On a point of such vital moment I am glad to cite the well-known and powerful statement of the great Bentley, at once the profoundest and the most daring of English critics: 'The real text of the sacred writers does not now (since the originals have been so long lost) lie in any single MS. or edition, but is dispersed in them all. 'Tis competently exact, indeed, in the worst MS. now extant; nor is one article of faith or moral precept either perverted or lost in them; choose as awkwardly as you can, choose the worst by design, out of the whole lump of readings.' And again: 'Make your 30,000 [variations] as many more, if numbers of copies can ever reach that sum; all the better to a knowing and serious reader, who is thereby more richly furnished to select what he sees genuine. But even put them into the hands of a knave or a fool, and, yet with the most sinistrous and absurd choice, he shall not extinguish the light of any one chapter, nor so disguise Christianity, but that every feature of it will still be the same.'* Thus," continues Scrivener, "hath God's Providence kept from harm the treasure of His written Word, so far as is needful for the quiet assurance of His Church and people." †

"It is not necessary, at the present day," he says in another work, "to enter upon a prolix discussion respecting the sources of the Textus Receptus [from which our English Authorised Version was made].

* *Remarks upon a Discourse of Freethinking*, sect. 32.

† *A Plain Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament* (Fourth Edition), vol. i., pp. 6, 7.

It will now be admitted on all hands that the learned persons who superintended the earlier editions of the New Testament both possessed a very limited critical apparatus, and did not always avail themselves as they ought of the resources which were within their reach. It is, therefore, most satisfactory to discover that the text which they formed bears, in all probability, a closer resemblance to the sacred autographs than that of some critics very much their superiors in Biblical science; who, moreover, had access to a vast treasure of materials, which was entirely unknown to their predecessors. I hope it is no presumptuous belief that the Providence of God took such care of His Church in the vital matter of maintaining His Word pure and uncorrupted, that He guided the minds of the first editors in the selection of the authorities on which they rested." *

Dr. Kenyon, of the British Museum, writes: "It cannot be too strongly asserted that in substance the text of the Bible is certain. Especially is this the case with the New Testament. The number of manuscripts of the New Testament, of early translations from it, and of quotations from it in the oldest writers in the Church is so large that it is practically certain that the true reading of every doubtful passage is preserved in some one or other of these ancient authorities. This can be said of no other ancient book in the world. Scholars are satisfied that they possess substantially the true text of the principal Greek and Roman writers whose works have come

* *A Supplement to the Authorised English Version of the New Testament*, pp. 6, 7.

down to us, of Sophocles, of Thucydides, of Cicero, of Virgil, yet our knowledge of their writings depends on a mere handful of manuscripts; whereas the manuscripts of the New Testament are counted by hundreds, and even thousands."*

Westcott and Hort present us with the like assurance. "With regard," they say, "to the great bulk of the words of the New Testament, as of most other ancient writings, there is no variation or other ground of doubt; and, therefore, no room for textual criticism." And they conclude their united statement with these words: "The amount of what can, in any sense, be called substantial variation, is but a small fraction of the residuary variation, and can hardly form more than a thousandth part of the entire text."† In other words, in every thousand words there is practically no question about nine hundred and ninety-nine. It is only over the thousandth word that textual critics have, by laborious comparison of the manuscripts, to determine the reading of the original text.

Dr. Ezra Abbot impresses the same fact in the following telling fashion: "The *number* of the 'various readings' frightens some innocent people, and figures largely in the writings of the more ignorant disbelievers in Christianity. 'One hundred and fifty thousand various readings'! Must not these render the text of the New Testament wholly uncertain, and thus destroy the foundation of our faith?

* *Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts*, pp. 10, 11.
† *The New Testament in the Original Greek*, vol. ii., p. 2.

"The true state of the case is something like this. Of the 150,000 various readings, more or less, of the text of the Greek Testament, we may, as Mr. Norton has remarked, dismiss nineteen twentieths from consideration at once as being obviously of such a character, or supported by so little authority, that no critic would regard them as having any claim to reception. This leaves, we will say, 7,500. But of these, again, it will appear, on examination, that nineteen out of twenty are of no sort of consequence as affecting the sense; they relate to questions of orthography or grammatical construction, or the order of words, or such other matters as have been mentioned above, in speaking of unimportant variations. They concern only the form of expression, not the essential meaning. This reduces the number to perhaps 400 which involve a difference of meaning, often very slight, or the omission or addition of a few words sufficient to render them objects of curiosity and interest; while a few exceptional cases among them may relatively be called important. But our critical helps are now so abundant that in a very large majority of these more important questions of reading we are able to determine the true text with a good degree of confidence. What remains doubtful we can afford to leave doubtful." *

Thus, even though we should have had to leave the whole of these 400 passages uncertain, we have the most absolute assurance, *through those very uncertain-*

* *Critical Essays*, pp. 208, 209.

ties, that all the rest of the New Testament has come to us as it left the hands of the Evangelists and the Apostles. If we had possessed only one manuscript, we should have had no trouble about various readings; for various readings could not have existed where there was no variety of copies. But how could we have known that our one copy was correct? Our small uncertainties would have indeed disappeared, but in their place we should have had one huge doubt. That doubt, thank God, has been swept away. Translations made in the second century—perhaps in the end of the first century—into Syriac and into Latin, tell us what they found in the first century copies from which the translations were made. The copies of the originals, which were rapidly multiplied at the very first and carried all over the world, have left some thousands of descendants. These, when examined, tell us what *they* found in the originals from which they were copied. These thousands of witnesses are absolutely unanimous in their testimony that these are the very words, and largely that this is the very order of the words, penned by each sacred writer. They are absolutely unanimous, except in regard to these 400 places—a discord which proves their independence; and, therefore, their value as witnesses. It will be seen, therefore, that, though the questions raised by these 400 differences could never be settled, they have infinitely enriched us, by the unquestionable assurance which they convey that every page of our New Testament, that every Book, and chapter, and verse of it besides have come down

to us just as they left the pen of inspiration. There is not one other ancient book, however prized, to which the like testimony, or a tithe of it, can be borne. The Bible is the one supremely-attested Book in the whole world's literature; and the devout reader will not fail to trace here the hand of God and to read His purpose, that "we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us" (Hebrews vi. 18).

CHAPTER VIII.

The Jewish Stewardship of the Old Testament: How it was Discharged.

WE now enter upon the second, and final, branch of our inquiry. We have seen how the New Testament originated, and how it at once assumed that place which it has held ever since in the Christian Church. It is natural to conclude that the Divine method, which was pursued in the bestowal of the New Testament, was simply a continuation of that which God had already followed in bestowing the Old Testament. In other words, having marked how the New Testament Canon was formed, we have anticipated the question as to the formation of the Canon of the Old Testament. That Canon must in the same way have formed itself. The Law was given amid manifestations which wrote the name of

God in letters of fire upon that great foundation of the Scripture. Each subsequent Book came with its own special Divine attestation; and, as it came, it was added (just as the New Testament was added) to the pre-existing Bible.

We shall find that this conclusion is fully justified by the facts; but our first duty is to inquire what the facts of the case are. In the forefront of these we have to recognise that the Jews have been, and still are, the custodians of, and the witnesses to, the Old Testament Scriptures. When the Scripture asks the question: "What advantage, then, hath the Jew?" the answer is summed up in these words: "Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the Oracles of God" (Rom. iii. 1, 2). Divine arrangements are enduring; and, though the Jew has rejected the grace of God in Christ, this custody of the Old Testament Scriptures has not been taken away from him. Both our Authorised and Revised Versions have been translated from the Hebrew Bible; that is, from the Bible of the Jew. We have thus recognised that people as the custodians of the Old Testament; and, from the time when Jerome made his Latin Version, in the fifth century of our era, to the present hour, the Christian Church has taken these "Oracles of God" from the hands of the Israelite.

Have we done wisely in this? Have the Jews been faithful to the trust? Have they taken pains to hand down these Scriptures as they were originally committed to them, so that we can accept the

copies which they now possess as containing the very words which the prophets placed upon the sacred page? To that question modern research has furnished an unexpected and highly gratifying reply.

More than a century ago, considerable attention was attracted to the condition of the Old Testament text. This new field was being then explored by Oriental scholars. Manuscripts were searched for, and were compared with one another. Anticipations of startling revelations were aroused in the learned world by the labours of Walton, of Kennicott, and of De Rossi. It was confidently expected, in some quarters, that reliance upon our present text would be greatly shaken, and, indeed, possibly destroyed. The various readings were collected and published; but when the list was scanned, the hopes of the rationalists sank and died. From that death there has till this hour been no resurrection. The labours of these scholars, and of others who followed them, have amply proved that no Book besides has ever been handed down to posterity with such scrupulous fidelity as has marked the transmission of this.

The following full admission of the effect of these researches comes from the most noted leader of the critical movement in Great Britain, the late Professor W. Robertson Smith: "What is the state of things," he asks, "as regards the Old Testament? All manuscripts of the Hebrew Bible (and we have none older than the ninth century after Christ) *represent one and the same text.* There are slight variations, but these are, almost without exception, such as

might have been made by a careful copyist acting under fixed rules, and do not affect the general state of the text. But we can go farther. We may say that the text of the Hebrew Old Testament which we now have is the same as lay before Jerome 400 years after Christ; the same as underlies certain translations into Chaldee called Targums, which were made in Babylonia in the third century after Christ; indeed the same text as was received by the Jewish doctors of the second century, when the Mishna was being formed, and when the Jewish proselyte, Aquila, made his translation into Greek. I do not affirm that there were no various readings in the copies of the second, or even of the fourth century; but the variations were slight and easily controlled, and such as would have occurred in manuscripts carefully transcribed from one standard copy." *

In a note to this passage the author says: "In the last century, great hopes were entertained of the results to be derived from a collation of Hebrew manuscripts. The collections of Kennicott (1776-1780) and De Rossi (1784-1788) showed that all manuscripts substantially represent one text, and, so far as the consonants are concerned, recent discoveries have not led to any new result." † The words which immediately follow those quoted above form so remarkable a confession of the strength of this part of our case that I cannot refrain from transcribing

* W. Robertson Smith, *The Old Testament in the Jewish Church*, pp. 69, 70.
† Page 397.

them at length. "The Jews, in fact," he proceeds, "from the time when their national life was extinguished, and their whole soul was concentrated upon the preservation of the monuments of the past, devoted the most strict and punctilious attention to the exact transmission of the received text, down to the smallest peculiarity of spelling, and even to certain irregularities of writing. Let me explain this last point. We find that when the standard manuscript had a letter too big, or a letter too small, the copies made from it imitated even this, so that letters of an unusual size appear in the same place in every Hebrew Bible. Nay, the scrupulousness of the transcribers went still further. In old manuscripts, when a copyist had omitted a letter—there was no running hand, it was a sort of printing with the pen, so that a letter might easily fall out—and, when the error was detected, as the copy was revised, the reviser inserted the missing letter above the line, as we should now do, with a caret. If, on the other hand, the reviser found that any superfluous letter had been inserted, he cancelled it by pricking a dot above it. Now, when such corrections occurred in the standard manuscript from which our Hebrew Bibles are all copied, the error and the correction were copied together, so that you will find, even in printed Bibles (for the system has been carried down into the printed text), letters suspended above the line to show that they had been inserted with a caret, and letters 'pointed' with a dot over them to show that they form no proper part of the text. This

shows with what punctilious accuracy the one standard copy was followed. In a few cases, however, it was thought necessary to suggest a correction on the reading of the text. There were some words, for example, which it was not thought decorous to use in public reading in the synagogue, and for this and other reasons, a few modifications were prescribed in the reading of the text. But the rule was laid down that you must not on that account change the text itself. The reader simply learned to pronounce, in reading certain passages, a different word from that which he found written; and in many manuscripts a note to this effect was placed on the margin. These notes are called *Keris*, the word *Keri* being the imperative 'read!' while the expression actually written in the text, but not uttered, is called *Kethîb* (written). Now, it is plain that such a system of mechanical transmission could not have been carried out with precision if copying had been left to uninstructed persons. The work of preserving and transmitting the received text became the specialty of a guild of technically-trained scholars, called the Massorets, or 'possessors of tradition;' that is, of tradition as to the proper way of writing the Bible. The Massorets laboured for centuries; their work was not completed till at least 800 years after the time of Christ; and they collected many orthographical rules and great lists of peculiarities of writing to be observed in passages where any error was to be feared, which are still preserved either as marginal notes or appendices to manuscripts of the

Bible, or in separate works. Besides this, the scholars of the period after the close of the Talmud—that is, after the sixth century, or thereby—devoted themselves to preserving not only the exact writing, but the exact reading and pronunciation of the Bible, according to the rules of the synagogal chanting. The final result of this labour was a system of vowel points and musical accents, which enable the trained reader to give exactly the correct pronunciation, and even the correct chanting tone, of every word in the Hebrew Old Testament." *

To complete the story, so well told in the preceding extract, it may be added that those Jewish scholars, called Massoretes, owed their impulse to an outbreak of what we may call Jewish Protestantism, if we are to believe some Jewish writers. Reinach † says that the sect of the Karaites, or Caraites, arose in the middle of the seventh century. "The Karaites rejected," he says, "in its entirety the oral tradition, the Talmud which is its organ, and all the institutions of recent origin, such as the Phylacteries, the permanent Calendar, the ritual prayers, &c. They maintained that only the prescriptions of the written law should be regarded, which they observed with the most extreme rigour." He proceeds to show that their attachment to the Law provoked the Talmudic Jews to a closer study of the sacred text. "Karaites and Rabbanites," he says, "rivalled each other from that time in zeal in grammatical and critical study of the sacred Books. To render them accessible to the

* Pages 70-72. † *Histoire des Israélites*, p. 55.

great majority of readers little versed in the study of Hebrew, they fixed the traditional pronunciation by the aid of a system of vowel-points and of accents, which from time to time were modified and improved. Then they sought to preserve the sacred text from all alteration by comparing the various readings, by choosing between them, by counting the number of the verses, of the words, and even of the letters in each Book of the Bible; this gigantic work, called the *Massorah*, was mainly the work of the Karaite doctors of the school of Tiberias."*

This account of the origin of the Karaites is repudiated by the sect itself; and it is remarkable that they do not bear the name of that founder whom Reinach assigns to them, or of any other. Their name comes from *kara*, "to read." Basnage,† following Buxtorf, points out that the word *karah* ("that which should be read") was applied to the Holy Scripture, and that it is from this that the Karaites derive their name. They were "Scripturists," and their name indicated their position. They permitted nothing to stand between them and the Word of God. The Karaite writers claim that they are the most ancient of all the Hebrew sects, and that they are the descendants of Ezra. In proof of this alleged descent, they show a long list of their leading teachers, from Ezra's time to the present. Their opponents, the Rabbins, admit their existence in the times of Alexander the Great; "for," say they, "when that prince entered Jerusalem, Jaddus, the chief priest, was already the head of the

* Pages 57, 58. † *Histoire des Juifs*, t. iii., ch. xvi.

Rabbanists, and Ananus and Cascanatus maintained with distinction the part of the Karaites. God declared Himself in favour of the first; for Jaddus worked a miracle in the presence of Alexander; but Ananus and Cascanatus manifested their powerlessness. . . . . The mistake is evident," continues Basnage, whose words I quote. "For," says he, "Ananus, whom they make a contemporary of Alexander the Great, lived only in the eighth century of the Christian era." *

Reinach repeats the assertion, most indignantly repudiated by the Karaites, that they are the representatives of the ancient Sadducees. But this is an accusation which the moderate Rabbins have themselves given up. Basnage identifies them with "the Doctors of the Law" who are mentioned in the Gospels. In Luke v. 17 ("And it came to pass on a certain day that there were Pharisees and Doctors of the Law sitting by, who were come out of every town of Galilee, and Judea, and Jerusalem") these "Doctors" are spoken of as if they were distinct from the Pharisees. And, as the suggestion cannot be entertained that they were Sadducees, the conclusion, though somewhat startling, seems to have something in its favour that these were the Karaites, who, as we have seen, were noted for their championship of the Scripture.

But, whatever may have been their origin, there can be no doubt that, under the Providence of God, we are largely indebted to their influence and work.

* *Histoire des Juifs*, ii. 375 (Edition 1716).

These Karaites stemmed the tide of that worship of the opinions of men which threatened to remove the Scriptures entirely from the Jewish people. "The labours of the Massorites may be regarded," says Dr. Ginsburg, "as a later development and continuation of the earlier work which was carried on by the *Sopherim* (the Scribes)—the doctors and authorised interpreters of the Law soon after the return of the Jews from the Babylonish captivity."* They (as well as their opponents, whom they stirred up) continued the work of the Jewish stewardship with what seems to have been a consuming zeal. Not only did they take every precaution to hand down the Old Testament Scriptures without alteration: they also devised means by which the purity of the text might afterwards be tested. They counted the verses of each book and section, and placed the number of them at the end. They marked the middle verse of each book. They pointed out the middle letter of the Pentateuch, and the middle clause of each book of it. They ascertained how often each letter of the Hebrew alphabet occurred in the Old Testament. They attempted no correction of the text, but, as we have seen, they marked the letters which they supposed to be superfluous and other features of the text which have been preserved to our own day.

The same intense solicitude is seen in their directions for copying the Scriptures. "The rules laid down by the Jews with regard to their manuscripts," says Mr. Forsyth, "are curious. They are to be

* *Introduction to the Massoretico-Critical Edition of the Hebrew Bible*, p. 287.

written upon parchment, made from the skin of a clean animal, and tied together by strings of a similar substance. Each skin is to contain a certain number of columns of a precise length and breadth, with a certain number of words. They are to be written with the purest ink, and no word is to be written by heart, or with points; and they are first to be orally pronounced by the copyist. Before he writes the name of God, he is to wash his pen." *

On no other book in the whole world's history has such labour been expended, or such ingenuity and care been lavished, to hand it on from generation to generation as it was received. Whatever may be said of the Jew, this enormous but ungrudged toil ought to be perpetually remembered. As if prompted by a Divinely-implanted instinct, the nation has magnificently fulfilled the duties of its stewardship, and has handed on to us the jealously-guarded "Oracles of God." It has had to abandon much in the fires of persecution, but these it has ever preserved unscathed.

CHAPTER IX.

What of the Apocrypha?

WE have just seen with what extraordinary care and scrupulous fidelity the Jews have handed down to us the Old Testament Books. This fact has an important bearing upon present controversies;

* *History of Ancient Manuscripts*, William Forsyth, p. 83.

for, if we can show that the Old Testament of to-day is the very Old Testament which was possessed by our Lord and the apostles, we shall have ended for believing men all discussion about the origin and authority of the Old Testament Books. I do not wish to anticipate our inquiry into what the New Testament has said of the Old; but it will be plain to everyone that, if we are certain that our Hebrew Bible is the very Hebrew Bible that lay under the eyes of the Lord Jesus, of Peter, and John, and James, and Paul, then we secure testimony of enormous importance in the present discussion as to the integrity and authenticity of the Old Testament.

To get a clear answer to this question is our object in this chapter and in that which follows it. We have marked the care which was taken by the Jews that no error should enter into the text. One other inquiry, however, has to be made. Have they handed on to us *all* the Books of the Old Testament? It is well known that, while our own Authorised Version agrees with the Hebrew Bible as to the number of the Old Testament Books, the Bible accepted by the Romish Church differs widely from both. It contains, in addition to our own Books, "The Book of Tobias," "The Book of Judith," certain additions to the Book of Esther, "The Book of Wisdom," "The Book of Ecclesiasticus," "The Prophecy of Baruch," a thirteenth chapter of Daniel (in the Douay Bible), giving the story of Susannah, and a fourteenth, containing that of Bel and the Dragon—while "the song of the three children" is inserted in the third

chapter. There are also added the "First and Second Books of the Maccabees." Those additions are found, too, in copies of the early Greek translation of the Old Testament called the Septuagint. In refusing these "Apocryphal" books a place among the Scriptures, have the Jews shut out part of the Oracles of God? Or, have they, on the contrary, proved, in their rigorous exclusion of these books, their fidelity to the trust committed to them? That is the question to which we have now to find an answer.

The Greek word, "apocrypha," means "hidden." When applied to books, it signifies that their origin is unknown. When the Council of Trent assembled in 1545, the Romish Church found itself in a position of great difficulty. The newly-recovered knowledge of Hebrew and Greek, and the appeal which the Reformers were making to the original Scriptures, placed the monks, and priests, and bishops generally in a position of great embarrassment. They knew nothing of these languages. Augustine had said: "Those who speak Latin require, in order to the understanding of the Scriptures, to be acquainted with two other languages, Hebrew and Greek, so that they may have recourse to ancient copies when the disagreement of Latin interpreters suggests any doubt."* But the Orders of monks instituted for the advancement of Christian knowledge left Greek and Hebrew manuscripts in undisturbed slumber upon their shelves, and they now attempted to beat down the revival of learning with foolish clamour. One monk

* *Christian Doctrine*, B. ii.

is reported to have declared from the pulpit that "a new language" had been discovered, "which," said he, "is called the Greek. It must be carefully avoided. This language is the mother of all heresies. I see in the hands of many a book written in that tongue; it is called the New Testament. It is a book full of briars and vipers. As for Hebrew, those who learn it, immediately become Jews." *

These and similar tactics were powerless, however, to arrest the new movement, and some other remedy was loudly called for. That which found favour with the Council was to decree the inspiration and absolute authority of the then current Latin Bible, the Vulgate, a translation largely made by Jerome and by earlier translators whose faulty renderings had by the fourth century obtained too strong a hold to be easily displaced. The Council ordained "that in all public lessons, discussions, preachings, and expositions, this ancient version shall be held as authentic, and that no one shall dare, or shall presume, to reject it *under any pretext whatever*." †

But the Council of Trent had to face another difficulty. In this Vulgate Bible the above-named apocryphal books were contained. These were not in the Hebrew Bible. Scholars knew that they had been allowed a place even in the Vulgate, not because they were part of Scripture, but solely on account of their suitableness for devotional reading. But the multitude were not aware of this. "Many,"

* Sismondi, *History of the French*, xvi.

† Bungener, *History of the Council of Trent*, p. 97.

says Pallavicini, the acknowledged Church historian of the Council of Trent, "lived in the most distressing ignorance with regard to this; the same book being adored by some as the expression of the Holy Ghost, and execrated by others as the work of a sacrilegious impostor." The Divines, those who were really scholars, and who were acquainted with the question, were asked to report. These were unanimous in declaring the inferiority of the apocryphal books. But to give effect to that opinion would be a surrender to Protestantism which it was felt the Church could not afford. They were therefore declared to be canonical for the first time in the history of the Christian Church. There were other additions in copies of the Septuagint which were not in the Vulgate, and which were, therefore, still left to rank as apocryphal and uncanonical. These are the so-called third and fourth books of Esdras, or Ezra, the third book of Maccabees, the so-called 151st Psalm, a professed appendix to Job, and a preface to Lamentations.

It may be well to remind the reader that the books which Rome thus canonised are quite unworthy of the place given to them. They are, in fact, the kind of books of which the Old Testament would have been made up if critical theories were true. They bear abundant marks of their spurious origin. We find in them the crude imaginations of an ignorant and superstitious time, and the chronological confusion which follows a romancer like his shadow. Tobit, the father of Tobias, loses his sight from the

droppings of a passing bird falling into his eyes as he was gazing upward into heaven. Tobias sets out, like Jacob, in search of a bride; and, like him, has to undertake a long journey eastward. He is joined by an angel, who becomes his companion for about 300 miles, and whose notions of truthfulness cannot be described as exact or commendable. Although he afterwards discloses that he is the angel Raphael, he introduces himself to Tobias at the beginning as Azarias, a son of one of the acquaintances of Tobias's father, which leads Tobias to reply, "Thou art of an honest and good stock." The bride whom Tobias goes to wed is unfortunate enough to be loved by a demon, who kills every bridegroom (for the young woman has already passed through the marriage ceremony several times) on the marriage night. The bridegroom enters the bridal chamber a living man, and is carried out next morning a corpse.

But this prolonged angel's visit is to save Tobias from a like fate, and that important purpose was effected in the following manner: "And as they went on their journey they came to the river Tigris, and they lodged there; and when the young man went down to wash himself, a fish leaped out of the river, and would have drowned him. Then the angel said unto him, Take the fish. And the young man laid hold of the fish and drew it to land. To whom the angel said, Open the fish, and take the heart, and the liver, and the gall, and put them up safely. So the young man did as the angel commanded him, and when they had roasted the fish, they did eat it.

Then the young man said unto the angel, Brother Azarias, to what use is the heart, and the liver, and the gall of the fish? And he said unto him, touching the heart and the liver, if a devil, or an evil spirit, trouble any, we must make a smoke thereof before the man or the woman, and the party shall be no more vexed. As for the gall, it is good to anoint a man who hath whiteness in his eyes; he shall be healed."* This gall is, of course, what is needed to restore old Tobit's eyesight, while Tobias finds the heart and the liver equally efficacious. Possessed of these, he confidently passes through the hitherto fatal ceremony, and enters the bridal chamber. There he set the heart and liver on fire; and, when the demon caught the odour of that perfume, it proved to be too much for him. He fled, we are told, "into the uttermost parts of Egypt," and troubled Tobias's bride no more.

The book is not less extraordinary in its chronology and its geography. Tobit, the father of Tobias, the hero of this story, is said to have been a youth when the ten tribes revolted from Rehoboam. This compels us to admit that he must have been 270 years old when the ten tribes were carried away to Assyria. But he survives that event, and nevertheless dies at the age of 158! The reader will have noticed that mention is made of the river Tigris. This river is represented as being nearer to Palestine than the Euphrates, thus exactly reversing the positions of these two important streams.

*Chapter vi.

The book of Judith forms another illustration of the Bible as it would have been had critical theories of its origin been true. The events which it describes are said to have taken place at "Bethulia," a place of which neither ancient records nor modern discoveries know anything. A like difficulty occurs with regard to the name of the High Priest. It can be found neither in the Scripture history nor in the list given by Josephus. It is equally impossible to assign a time to the events mentioned. According to the book, the temple of Solomon is still standing, so that a time must be found before the Jewish captivity. But how shall we, then, explain the presence of Holofernes, "a Prince of *Persia*," at the head of a mighty army, at a time when the field was occupied either by the Assyrian or by the Babylonian empire? Problems of the same kind are presented by that general's ignorance of the Israelites, seeing that he has to make the inquiry, "Tell me now, ye sons of Canaan, who this people is that dwelleth in the hill country, and what are the cities they inhabit." We are similarly at a loss to find a place for the great and lasting tranquility which resulted from Judith's slaying of the Persian general. We are told that "she waxed old in her husband's house, being 105 years old. And there was none that made the children of Israel any more afraid in the days of Judith; nor a long time after her death." She is represented as a young woman when the alleged deliverance of her people was effected. When this is borne in mind, and it is remembered also that

there was no troubler of Israel for "a long time after her death," it is clear that this tranquility must have endured for at least 120 years. As everyone is aware, there was no such period of peace during those troublous days of Israel's history. It may be added that Nebuchadnezzar is said to have reigned at *Nineveh*, in evident ignorance of the facts that in Nebuchadnezzar's time Nineveh had been destroyed, and that this great king dwelt in Babylon, the city which he loved, and which he had re-built and adorned.

The only books for which a good word can be said are those of 1 Maccabees, The Wisdom of Solomon, and Ecclesiasticus. The first, notwithstanding some errors, gives us reliable history. This, and the others, however, though they contain good counsel, are on a much lower level than that of the Scriptures. But a complete answer to the Trent Canon is its novelty. The mere fact that it was necessary in 1545 to decree that those books should be received as part of the Word of God, is eloquent. Through all those past centuries, these books had in vain sought general acceptance; and they were canonized now only through the stress and strain experienced by a Church which was contending for its old pre-eminence, if not for its existence.

The act was done also in the face of the distinct and persistent testimony of the Christian Church. While these and other books were valued as helpful religious literature, and were even occasionally added to Greek manuscripts of the Old Testament, it was distinctly confessed that they did not belong to the

number of the Canonical Books. Eusebius, the historian of the early Church who wrote in the fourth century of our era, says: "After the return from captivity until the advent of our Saviour there is no book which can be esteemed sacred." And, when speaking of the Maccabees, he says: "These books are not received as Divine Scriptures." In other words, the Old Testament Canon closed with Malachi. Gregory Nazianzen, after giving a catalogue of the Canonical Books, says: "Let no one add to these Divine books, nor take away anything from them. I think it necessary to add this, that there are other books besides those which I have enumerated as constituting the Canon, which, however, do not belong to it, but were set forth by the early fathers, to be read for the sake of the instruction which they contain." Cyril of Jerusalem (348 A.D.) writes in his Catechism: "Read nothing which is Apocryphal. Read the Scriptures, namely, the twenty-two books of the Old Testament, which were translated by the seventy-two interpreters." Jerome, in his general preface to his translation of the Scriptures, says, after mentioning the Books which he had rendered into Latin from the Hebrew: "All besides them must be placed among the Apocryphal." In his special preface to the Books of Solomon, he refers to "Wisdom" and "Ecclesiasticus," and remarks: "As the Church reads the Books of Judith, Tobit, and the Maccabees, but does not receive them among the Canonical Scriptures, so also may she read these two books for the edification of the common people, but not as

authority to confirm any of the doctrines of the Church."

Other ancient testimonies are equally emphatic; and nothing could be more significant than the fact that the early Syriac Version of the Old Testament, named the Peshitto, does not contain the apocryphal books. This means either that the translators knew nothing of them; or that, though they knew of their existence, they knew of no title they possessed to rank with the Old Testament Scriptures.

CHAPTER X.

Is the Apocrypha Quoted in the New Testament?

STRENUOUS attempts have been made to show that an affirmative reply must be given to the above question. Stier, in his zeal to uphold the apocrypha, made a list of 102 passages in which, he claimed, the New Testament writers either referred to, or quoted from, the apocryphal books. No one has been bold enough to adopt that list; but a few "proof passages" are occasionally produced. Karl Budde says: "The New Testament writers show no scruple in quoting extra-canonical books as sacred, and we find ascribed to Jesus some expressions quoted as Holy Writ (Luke xi. 49; John vii. 38) which are not contained in the Old Testament. What is more, examples of this form of Jewish

literature fused with Christian elements, or worked over from the Christian point of view, have found their way into the Canon of the Old Testament itself—a fact which has only lately begun to receive the attention it deserves." *

The unscholarly extravagance which marks that statement is specially manifest in the opening sentence, which informs us that the New Testament writers "show no scruple in quoting extra-canonical books as sacred." This, if true, would have been one of the most extraordinary things in literature—sacred or profane. For men, not unacquainted with the apocrypha, have for eighteen centuries been devoting their lives to the study of the New Testament, and are not only ignorant of this free reference to, and sanction of, the apocrypha, but also repel the suggestion of it with indignation. The second statement, which assumes that our Lord quoted apocryphal books as Holy Writ, is equally reckless. The words: "Therefore also said the wisdom of God, I will send them prophets and apostles, and some of them they shall slay and persecute," &c. (Luke xi. 49-51); and those other: "He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water" (John vii. 38), are confidently asserted to be from books outside the Scriptures, though no one has ever been able to find them in any apocryphal writing! A reference to the Old Testament, however, proves that we do not require to travel outside the Scripture;

* *Encyclopædia Biblica*, Art. "Canon."

for we discover the importance which is there assigned to figures and promises embodying the very imagery referred to by our Lord. This is specially prominent in that silently-surrendered Book, Solomon's Song. The Messiah says of the Church: "A garden enclosed is My sister, My spouse; a spring shut up, a fountain sealed . . . A fountain of gardens, a well of LIVING WATERS [the very phrase used by our Lord], and streams from Lebanon." That the Church, though loved, is shown as "a spring shut up," "a fountain sealed," tells her need and her destiny. The description is an implied promise that the day will come when the fountain will be unsealed and when the spring will be opened.

It may be safely said that had that passage been found in any apocryphal book, the rationalistic camp would have rung with rejoicing. The assertion would have been loudly made that this was the very passage which our Lord had in view. But it does not stand alone. Not to mention the references under this figure to the coming salvation; the smitten rock in the desert; the promise that in the day of Israel's redemption they shall "draw water with joy from the wells of salvation" (Isa. xii. 3), and the words in Isaiah xliv. 3, lv. 1, lviii. 11; we find two striking predictions which explain our Lord's reference. The first is Ezekiel xlvii. 1-12. The prophet sees waters streaming out of the temple. They are pouring out from under "the threshold of the house eastward." The flood covers the land deeper and deeper, until it becomes "waters to swim in." By that East

Gate the Lord had entered! He had passed in to His Temple there, and this is the result. The waters are also described as coming down from "the right side of the house, at the south side of the altar." The "right side of the house," and the south side of the altar, was God's *right* hand, as from the Holy of Holies He looked towards the altar. It is the place of acceptance—of acceptance at the altar—the place of pardon and reconciliation and peace through sacrifice. It is thence the waters flow. That word was now explained and applied by the Lord Jesus. From the depths of that visited temple, from within this acceptance with God, the blessing would flow forth to refresh and fructify the waiting earth.

The second passage is *Z*echariah xiv. 8, 9: "And it shall be in that day, that living waters [here, again, the very phrase used by our Lord] shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea; in summer and in winter shall it be. And the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and His name one." Recall for a moment the occasion so carefully described in the Gospel, and the whole will now be clear. We know from Jewish sources that on each day of the feast of Tabernacles a priest went down to the pool of Siloam, filled a golden vessel with water, passed up with it to the Temple amidst a joyous procession, took his place by the altar and poured it out there together with wine while the priests and the people sang the Hallel

(Psalms cxiii.-cxviii.) On the eighth day the Hallel was sung, but the water was not brought. It was on that day, "the last day, that great day of the feast," when the omission of the poured-out water had made its impression, that the Lord, with a voice which commanded the attention of one and all in that immense throng, spoke the words of this promise. The time will come when living waters shall not only be poured out upon that Temple, but shall also flow forth from it; and the time had even then come when believing men could receive and give forth God's great salvation.

The quotation from Luke (xi. 49-51) need not detain us. The words: "Therefore also said THE WISDOM OF GOD," apparently furnish us with the reference, and indicate how full the Old Testament is of prophecy. We should not think of the Book of Proverbs as one that told beforehand the fate of the Gospel message and of the Jewish people. And yet it is to it that this phrase directs us. There we find these words: "Wisdom crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets: she crieth in the chief place of concourse . . in the city she uttereth her words. . . . . Turn ye at My reproof: behold, I will pour out My spirit unto you, I will make known My words unto you" (i. 20-23). And what will the result be? Rejection; for these words follow immediately: "Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out My hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all My counsel, and would none of My reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity;

I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as a desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind. . . . Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices" (24-31). The words of our Lord not only cite the prediction: they also interpret and apply it. The passage in Proverbs indicates a time of mighty prophetic activity: this, we are now taught, was fulfilled in the sending forth of prophets and apostles. The Spirit in the Proverbs intimates that the result will be determined refusal; and the Lord bids the Jews note that this will be realised in their slaying some and persecuting others of His messengers. The Spirit testifies that the Divine wrath will be manifested in God's withdrawal and in the abandonment of His people to desolating terror and fearful destruction. This, again, our Lord interprets. He discloses the truth and leaves it sounding in the ears of the multitude and inscribed upon the page of Scripture. It was interpretation that was needed, and not mere repetition. That generation required to know that it was itself that had stood before the omniscient eye of God.

There are passages, however, which are frequently cited as distinct New Testament quotations from apocryphal books. Speaking of these, Wildeboer says: "The fact that New Testament writers quote from Apocryphal books can only be denied by dogmatic prejudice."* Let me say a word on the two strongest of these alleged instances. In 2 Tim. iii. 8 the names are given of the two leading opponents

* *The Origin of the Canon of the Old Testament*, p. 51.

of Moses among the magicians at the Court of Pharaoh. They are Jannes and Jambres. Origen tells us of an apocryphal work, entitled *Jannes and Mambres.* But it appears to have been one of the least successful of these forgeries. It was condemned by Pope Gelasius, and afterwards disappeared. There is no proof whatever that it existed in the apostle's time; and, even though it had existed then, the form *Mambres* would have indicated that the names were not taken from it. This apocryphal book, however, merely embodied an ancient and widespread tradition. Pliny, the Roman naturalist, mentions Jannes in connection with Moses*; and the names appear in the Targums and in the Talmud. The common opinion has been that Paul refers to the old tradition. A more worthy belief is that these names of the opposers of God's ancient servant are here revealed to us by the Spirit. Recent investigation proves that Jannes, at least, was an Egyptian name *of that very time;* and, in any case, the assertion that this is a quotation from an apocryphal book is quite unproved.

The only instance which has even a semblance of strength is the passage in Jude (verses 14, 15): "And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him." Some

* Bk. xxx. ch. ii.

even of our ablest apologists have yielded to learned clamour, and have given way here. "This appears," writes the late Dr. Green, of Princeton, "to be taken from the Book of Enoch, chapter ii."* But the critics have built here upon the usual sandy foundation. There is absolutely no proof that the apocryphal Book of Enoch was in existence in the first century; and the ordinary reader will naturally ask how the assertion that the book was quoted from could have been ventured until it was certain that the book then existed. The forgery which goes by this name is marked by such an evident knowledge of Christian doctrine that the critics have been compelled to admit that part of it at least is of late date. Some of them, indeed, have contended that the book cannot be earlier than 132 A.D. The reader, however, will be able to form his own judgment when he notes the following facts. A conspicuous feature of the work, and one which must have been due to the original writer, is the prominence given to the Messiah. He is spoken of as "the Son of God," as He "whose name was named before the sun was made." He is said also to have "existed aforetime in the presence of God." He is spoken of, too, as "the Son of woman," and "the Son of Man." That this conception of Him who was to come was possible to any uninspired writer before the advent of Christ is simply incredible. We have in Philo and Josephus a distinct revelation of the thought even of our Lord's own time, and there is nothing resembling this to be found anywhere. Who knew,

* *General Introduction to the Old Testament*, p. 148.

for instance, that the Messiah was to be One who had existed from all eternity; in other words, was God Himself? And yet we are asked by those men, who themselves can believe so little, to believe that this was a conception readily attainable before the coming of Christ! Here is the passage in this so-called Book of Enoch: "In that hour was this Son of Man invoked before the Lord of Spirits, and His name in the presence of the Ancient of days. Before the sun and the signs were created, before the stars of heaven were formed, His name was invoked in the presence of the Lord of Spirits. Therefore the Elect and the Concealed One existed in His presence, before the world was created and for ever" (xlviii. 2, 3, 5). That there are predictions in the Old Testament which quite bear out all this, we frankly admit. But these were enigmas to the Jews then, and they have been enigmas to them ever since. It was the most unexpected of all revelations to the apostles themselves; and it is simply incredible that any forger, writing in the first century B.C., could have penetrated a mystery that was hid from that generation as from preceding generations.

Still more extraordinary, in their anticipation of Christianity, would have been some other parts of the book. The Messiah, it tells us, will be the object of universal faith and worship. All the rulers of the earth "shall fix their hopes on this Son of Man, shall pray to Him, and petition Him for mercy" (lxi.10-13); "All who dwell on earth shall fall down and worship before Him, and sing praise to the name of the Lord

of Spirits" (xlviii. 4). The Messiah is also to be the Judge of men and angels: "O ye kings, O ye mighty who inhabit the world, you shall behold My Elect One sitting upon the throne of My glory. And He shall judge Azazeel, all his associates and all his hosts, in the name of the Lord of Spirits" (liv. 5); "They blessed, glorified, and exulted, because the name of the Son of Man was revealed to them. He sat upon the throne of His glory"—words which are plainly taken from Matthew xxv. 31—"and the principal part of the judgment was assigned to Him, the Son of Man" (lxviii. 39). There are also distinct allusions to the Trinity. We read of "all the angels of the Lords, namely, of the Elect One and of the other Power who was upon the earth over the water in that day" (lx. 13, 14). The Elect One is, as we have seen, identified with the Messiah, and "the other Power" is clearly the Spirit of God, spoken of in Genesis i. 2 as moving "upon the face of the waters." That the Jews before Christ believed in a doctrine which they have abhorred ever since His coming, the critics will have difficulty in inducing anyone to credit. But, if the book did not exist in the time of Jude, it is clear that Jude could not have quoted from it. The words are a precious revelation to us of the ministry of this ancient servant of God, and of the fact that the old world also had its prophets and its witnesses. That Jude should be used to show us this is nothing strange. Hosea conveys to us a fact, for instance, regarding Jacob, of which we find no account in Genesis. Jacob, he tells us, in his wrest-

ling with the angel, "wept and made supplication unto him" (xii. 4). Paul communicates a saying of Jesus which is not found in any of the Gospels (Acts xx. 35). These and other communications, like this regarding Enoch's prophetic ministry, were given as they were needed.

Reuss, who has cut himself loose from all Scriptural authority, has no scruple in admitting that the attack from this side has failed. "In all the New Testament," he says, "no one has been able to point out a single dogmatic passage taken from the Apocrypha and quoted as proceeding from a sacred authority. Hence, whatever may have been the practice followed in the various Christian communities, it must be said that the apostolic teaching, so far as we are acquainted with it, adhered to the Hebrew canon."* But, if there is no proof in the New Testament of any acknowledgment of apocryphal books, there is certainly not a shadow of justification for the statement that they ever had a place in the Jewish Canon. They were never at any time received as sacred by the Jews. "The Apocrypha . . which were wholly foreign to the use of the Synagogue," says Wildeboer, "had never been thought of in authoritative Jewish schools for reading in the Synagogue."† It appears also that they were not included in copies of the only early Greek translation, called the Septuagint, down to 300 A.D. For Cyril of Jerusalem says: "Read the Divine Scriptures, namely, the twenty-

* *The History of the Canon of Holy Scripture*, pp. 8, 9.
† *The Origin of the Canon of the Old Testament*, p. 92.

two books of the Old Testament, which the seventy-two interpreters translated." Here the number of the Books is the same as those (as we shall afterwards see) which are contained in the present Hebrew Bible. The Greek translator of the Book of Ecclesiasticus (who was also the grandson of the author) makes no claim to have that work recognised as canonical. His words plainly imply, on the contrary, that the Scriptures stand entirely apart from his and all other books. Josephus, too, a contemporary of the apostles, speaks in the same way. He intimates his knowledge of the existence of later books, written after the closing of the Old Testament Canon; "but," he says, these have "not been deemed worthy of like credit with what preceded, because the exact succession of the prophets ceased;" and he adds that, "though so long a time has now passed, no one has dared either to add anything to them, or to take anything from them, or to alter anything in them."* Philo of Alexandria, a somewhat earlier witness, gives the same testimony. Speaking of the Jews and their sacred Scriptures, he says: "They have not changed so much as a single word in them. They would rather die a thousand deaths than detract anything from these laws and statutes."†

* *Cont. Apion.*, i. 8. † Eusebius, *De Prep. Evang.*, viii.

CHAPTER XI.

Have we To-day the very Scriptures Possessed by our Lord and His Apostles?

THE importance of this question is evident, and will be still plainer when we inquire into the New Testament witness to the Old. Happily the question admits of a clear and satisfactory reply.

Let us divide the inquiry into two parts, and ask, first of all, whether our Old Testament contains the same number of Books as the Jews possessed in their Sacred Scriptures in the first century of the Christian era. Have no Books been lost? Have any been added? Beginning with the fourth century of the Christian era, we find the Christian Church then possessed of the same Old Testament Scriptures as have been handed down to us. Rufinus, who was a contemporary and a friend of Jerome, and who flourished about 390 A.D., gives the following enumeration of them: "First of all," he writes, "five Books of Moses have been handed down. After these, Joshua and Judges, together with Ruth. After them, four Books of Kings, which the Jews number as two; Chronicles, which are called 'the Book of days;' and Ezra two Books . . . and Esther. Of the prophets there are Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel, besides one Book of the twelve Prophets. Job also, and the Psalms of David, and three of Solomon." *

* *Expos. in Symbol. Apost.*

These three Books of Solomon are Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and The Song of Songs. The twelve Minor Prophets were reckoned as one Book. Here, then, we have all the Books of the Old Testament. There are none wanting, and there are no additions. Indeed, this writer is careful to define the position of the apocryphal books. After adding the New Testament Books to the above list, he says: "These are the books which the fathers have included within the Canon, by which they would establish the tenets of our faith. One should know, however, that there are other books, *which are not canonical*, but which our ancestors called *ecclesiastical;* for example, the *Wisdom of Solomon*, [the book] of *Sirach*, called by the Latins *Ecclesiasticus*. . . . Of the same order is the little book of *Tobit* and *Judith*, and the books of the *Maccabees*."

This, which is also the general testimony of the fathers, is perfectly clear. It is specially noteworthy also in regard to the *order* of the books, as we shall have occasion to remark by-and-bye, when we come to speak of the Historical Books of the Old Testament. Jerome, in his *Prologus Galeatus*, gives us the arrangement which was favoured by his Jewish teachers. The Jews divide the Books into three sections. The first consists of the five Books of the Law—Genesis to Deuteronomy. The second they call "the Prophets," among which they reckon the historical Books from Joshua to 2 Kings. This also embraces all the prophetical Books with the exception of Daniel. The third, and last, division, is named

Kethubim, "the writings," called in Greek the *Hagiographa*, that is, the "holy writings." This contains the Book of Job, the Psalms, Proverbs, and the other Books which Jerome names. He first of all explains the Rabbinical conceit which saw a striking analogy between the number of letters in the Hebrew alphabet and the number of Books in the Hebrew Bible. This resemblance would not occur to us; for, while there are twenty-two letters in that alphabet, there are really thirty-nine Books in the Old Testament. But the Jews, by putting a number of Books together, managed to make the twenty-two; and when they had accomplished this, they noticed another analogy. Five of the Hebrew letters have each of them two distinct forms. The letter has one form when it is written at the end of a word, and another form when it occupies some other place in a word. These are consequently named "double letters." It seemed to the Jews, therefore, a remarkable fact that there should be five double Books in their Bible just as there are five double letters in their alphabet. These are Samuel (I. and II.), Kings (I. and II.), Chronicles (I. and II.), Ezra (with which they place Nehemiah), and Jeremiah (to which Lamentations is added). But, like many other eager theorists, they forgot some things. There was a sixth double-Book, namely, Judges-Ruth; and there was a twelve-fold Book (the Minor Prophets) to which, fortunately for the learner of their noble and honoured tongue, their alphabet provides no analogy.

Jerome names each of the Books both by its

Hebrew name and by that by which it was known to the Christian Churches. I give below the Books; the names and the order of which he has thus placed on record:

The Law (5 Books).	The Prophets (8 Books).	The Hagiographa (9 Books).
(1) Genesis.	(1) Joshua.	(1) Job.
(2) Exodus.	(2) Judges (with Ruth).	(2) Psalms.
(3) Leviticus.	(3) Samuel (1st and 2nd Books).	(3) Proverbs.
(4) Numbers.	(4) Kings (1st and 2nd Books).	(4) Ecclesiastes.
(5) Deuteronomy.	(5) Isaiah.	(5) Song of Songs.
	(6) Jeremiah (with Lamentations).	(6) Daniel.
	(7) Ezekiel.	(7) Chronicles.
	(8) The 12 Minor Prophets.	(8) Ezra (with Nehemiah).
		(9) Esther.

If we add together the numbers of the Books in each division—five, eight, and nine—we find that they amount to twenty-two, the number of letters in the Hebrew alphabet.

He adds that some placed *Ruth* and *Lamentations* among the Hagiographa, and thus make twenty-four Books instead of twenty-two. Those who did this, however, were probably desirous to make the number of the Books agree with the number of letters in the *Greek* alphabet, which is twenty-four.

The writing in which Jerome communicates the above information he named *Prologus Galeatus*, that is, "a helmeted Preface." He explains the meaning of the name. He says that the above list will be an armed fence round about the Canonical Books of the

Old Testament; "so that," he adds, "we may be sure that whatsoever is outside this must be placed among the Apocrypha." This testimony is decisive. Jerome, resident at that time in Palestine, took special pains to inform himself as to what the Jews believed concerning the sacred Books. We have, therefore, in the catalogue given above, the Jewish Canon in the year 380 of our era. It is, so far as the number of the Books is concerned, in absolute agreement with our English Old Testament. No Books have disappeared since 380 A.D.; and no Books have been added.

Passing upward now to the second century, we find Melito, who was Bishop of Sardis about 170 A.D., informing us what the Jewish Canon was at that time. He writes to one Onesimus, a friend of his, who is apparently deeply interested in this inquiry. The letter runs as follows: "Melito, to Onesimus his brother, greeting. Since you have often requested, from the earnest desire which you cherish for the Word, that you might have a selection made for you from the Law and the Prophets, which has respect to our Saviour and the whole of our faith; and since moreover you have been desirous to obtain an accurate account of the ancient Books, both as to their number and their order, I have taken pains to accomplish this, knowing your earnestness in respect to the faith, and your desire for instruction in regard to the Word; and most of all, that you, while striving after eternal salvation, through desires after God, give a preference to these things. Making a journey therefore into the East, and having arrived at the place where these

things were proclaimed and transacted, I there learned accurately the Books of the Old Testament, which I arrange and transmit to you. The names are as follows: The five Books of Moses—Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy. Then Joshua (son) of Nun, Judges, Ruth, four Books of Kings [including two of Samuel and two of Kings], two of Chronicles, The Psalms of David, the Proverbs of Solomon (also called Wisdom), Ecclesiastes, the Song of Songs, Job. Prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah, the twelve in one Book, Daniel, Ezekiel, Ezra. From these I have made selections, distributing them into six Books."

Melito is the earliest Christian writer who has left us a list of the Old Testament Books. He was held in the highest esteem by the early Church. Tertullian, who was a contemporary of his, says that most Christians called Melito "a Prophet." The very fact, too, of his travelling to Palestine, and his taking pains, as he says, to learn "accurately" *(akritōs)* the number and the order of the Books of the Old Testament, invests the above testimony with peculiar importance. Nehemiah is, as usual, included in the name Ezra. But there is one Book apparently omitted. This is Esther. This is almost certainly due to a mistake made by Eusebius, in whose pages alone the quotation from Melito has been preserved. A similar slip was made by him in his account of the testimony of Origen in regard to the Old Testament Books. Origen distinctly says that they number twenty-two. But Eusebius, in copying Origen's list,

only gives us twenty-one. In this instance, the Book of the Minor Prophets is omitted, a Book which Origen can by no possibility have intended to exclude. Turning to Melito's list, we find that the Books, as named by him, number only twenty-one. The twenty-second has been omitted, and the missing Book can only have been Esther.

This testimony of Melito's brings us to the second century of the Christian era. We have now to listen to another, not now from a Christian source, but from a Jewish, which takes us back to the first century, and to the very time of our Lord. Josephus was born in the year 37 of our era; and, as he tells us how many Books formed the Holy Scriptures of the Jews at that time, his testimony is decisive. The Bible of Josephus was the Bible of his childhood, the Bible of his parents, and of their contemporaries; and, consequently, the Bible of our Lord. It was the Bible of the Synagogues at Nazareth and Capernaum, of all the Synagogues in Judea and in Galilee. It was the Bible of the Temple, and the Bible whose words the Lord quoted to His disciples when He opened their minds that they might understand its sayings. "We have not," says Josephus, "a countless number of books, discordant and arrayed against each other, but only two-and-twenty books, containing the history of every age, which are justly accredited as Divine; and of these, five belong to Moses, which contain both the laws and the history of the generations of men until his death. This period lacks but little of 3,000 years. From the

death of Moses, moreover, until the reign of Artaxerxes, king of the Persians after Xerxes, the prophets who followed Moses have described the things that were done during the age of each one respectively, in *thirteen* books. The remaining *four* contain hymns to God, and rules of life for men. From the time of Artaxerxes, moreover, until our present period, all occurrences have been written down; but they are not regarded as entitled to the like credit with those which precede them, because there was no certain succession of prophets. Fact has shown what confidence we place in our own writings. For, although so many ages have passed away, no one has dared to add to, nor to take anything from them, nor to make alterations. In all Jews it is implanted, even from their birth, to regard them as being the instructions of God, and to abide steadfastly by them; and, if it be necessary, to die gladly for them." *

The numbers given in this extract enable us to determine definitely the Books which formed the Bible of Josephus and of our Lord. He indicates the threefold division in our present Hebrew Bibles—the Law, the Prophets, and the *Kethubim*—that is, the *Hagiographa*, or "holy writings." The Books were numbered then, as afterwards, in accordance with the number of letters in the Hebrew alphabet. They were, in all, twenty-two—five of Moses, thirteen of the Prophets, and four of the Hagiographa. Let us arrange them, as they plainly stood before the mind of Josephus :—

* *Con. Apion.*, i. 8.

The Books of Moses (5).	The Prophets (13).	Those containing Hymns to God and rules of life for Men (4).
(1) Genesis.	(1) Joshua.	(1) The Psalms.
(2) Exodus.	(2) Judges and Ruth.	(2) The Proverbs.
(3) Leviticus.	(3) 1st and 2nd Samuel.	(3) Ecclesiates.
(4) Numbers.	(4) 1st and 2nd Kings.	(4) Song of Songs.
(5) Deuteronomy.	(5) 1st and 2nd Chronicles.	
	(6) Ezra and Nehemiah.	
	(7) Esther.	
	(8) Isaiah.	
	(9) Jeremiah and Lamentations.	
	(10) Ezekiel.	
	(11) Daniel.	
	(12) The Minor Prophets.	
	(13) Job.	

Job is here included among the historical Books, and we have in Josephus, Book for Book, the very Bible which we have in our hands to-day. It contained no fewer Books: it embraced no more. No Book has been lost from the Old Testament Scriptures since the days of our Lord; and none has been added to them. Attempts have been made to show that the testimony of Josephus and of the rest is not to be received. It will be seen that there is not the slightest suggestion of uncertainty as to the Divine origin and authority of a single Book in the entire collection. They are all "accredited," says Josephus, "as Divine;" and he further indicates that they were so from the time when they were given. He follows this up by showing that they have a unique place in the literature of his people. They have other histories, he tells us, but "they are not entitled," he adds, "to the like credit with those which precede them." All this, the critics tell us, is

unreliable. The Canon was not, they say, so firmly established in Josephus' time. They maintain that until the second century of our era some Books of our present Old Testament were still under discussion, and had not been finally received into the Canon. "It is a matter of fact," writes Prof. W. Robertson Smith, "that the position of several books was still subject of controversy in the apostolic age, and was not finally determined till after the fall of the Temple and the Jewish State."* This grave assertion is founded upon some references in the Talmud to disputes in the Jewish Schools as to whether certain Books "defiled the hands." These are understood to imply a doubt in the minds of those who raised the questions as to whether those Books were fully inspired. But, granting that the critical view of this matter is correct, the contention does not help their case in the slightest degree. The questions were raised *because those Books were already in the Canon.* It was a criticism of the Canonical position of the Books; but in order to have that position criticised, the position had, first of all, to be occupied. These questions about certain Books defiling, or not defiling, the hands were mere Rabbinical refinements, and were expressive of neither national nor scholastic doubt as to the Divine authority of the Books. "The discussions," says Wildeboer, "make altogether the impression, as Nöldeke has justly remarked, that the disputed books were in use, but that objections had been raised against their use in the synagogue.

* *The Old Testament in the Jewish Church* (Second Edition), p. 187.

Accordingly the question was not, shall the books be accepted? but rather, should they not be withdrawn?" * This is fully borne out by the fact that the Jews from the beginning have had only one Canon. They have had different sects and schools, but they have never had *different* collections of the sacred Books. They have had but one Bible from the days of our Lord to the present hour; and that, in respect of its Books, is the Old Testament which we possess to-day.

After prolonged discussion, this is now admitted. Wildeboer, whose book on the Canon of the Old Testament is very frequently marked by a refreshing honesty, as well as learning, says: "It must be noted that in the Talmud, both in the Gemara (about 500 A.D.), and in the Mishna (about 200 A.D.), the existence of our Canon and its division into Tora, Nebiim, and Kethubim are everywhere taken for granted." † In an earlier passage, when referring to the testimony of Josephus, he writes: "My impression is that Josephus' view . . . . . contains important elements of historic truth. These elements are: 1. That the line between Canonical and uncanonical coincides, in the thought of Josephus, and the circle of which he is a representative, with the cessation of prophecy; and 2. That a general settled persuasion, in regard to canonicity, precedes the decision of the schools. We shall see, in fact, that n the days of Josephus the schools still had their doubts about certain books of the third division.

* Page 92. † Page 58.

But among the people there existed in his days such a reverence for precisely the books which still constitute our Canon (as the number given by Josephus proves) that 'if need be they would gladly die for them.' "* But the critics will have to abandon this last refuge as they have abandoned the rest. There could not have been any conflict in the schools concerning the Canon. Josephus belonged to the learned, and he speaks for them as for the rest of the nation, when he declares their clear, full, and reverent acceptance of these and of no other Books.

Another question remains. We have seen that the Books are the same; and we now complete our inquiry by asking whether the contents of these Books are the same now as they were in the first century. In other words, has the Old Testament text been faithfully handed down to us? The reply is brief and satisfactory. We have already noted the critical confession of the accuracy with which the Hebrew text has been transmitted from the tenth century of the Christian era to the present hour. The most ancient manuscripts which we now have are in similar striking agreement. This indicates that the extreme and reverent care which has marked the work of the more recent scribes also marked that of more ancient times. No liberties whatever were taken with the text. No additions were made to it. Nothing was taken away from it. So thoroughly was such dishonest, or even careless, treatment of the text opposed to the sentiments of the transcribers,

* Page 46.

that even a difference in size of the letters in the more ancient manuscript, which they were copying, was preserved. They did not know why the letter should be different in size or in position from the rest. But it was not theirs to reason: it was theirs to transcribe, with absolute fidelity, the sacred Book. The letters appeared in the copy just as they were in the manuscript from which the copy was made.

Another remarkable fact has been discovered through the comparison of the manuscripts and the ancient versions of the Old Testament. It has been made quite clear (as will be seen from the words quoted on page 90 from W. Robertson Smith) that one standard copy has been used, from which the others have been transcribed. This has been a surprise to scholars; and the fact is one of the very greatest significance. When a scribe took it in hand to write out a copy of the Old Testament, he did not procure an older copy from one place and several others from several other places, compare them together, and, where they might happen to differ from each other, follow the readings of the majority of the manuscripts. On the contrary, the new manuscript was made from, and corrected by, *one standard copy*. It is plain, therefore, that the Jews had one standard manuscript, which was regarded as settling every question about the text.

Josephus helps us to understand how this peculiarity originated. In referring to Moses' bringing water from the rock in the wilderness, he says: "That God had foretold this to Moses, the Scripture laid up

in the temple shows." * Josephus was a priest, and was fully acquainted with what the Temple contained. We learn here, therefore, that there was a standard copy of the Sacred Scriptures, containing no doubt some at least of the original documents, preserved in the Temple. He makes other references to the same fact. Mentioning the prolonging of that day when Joshua defeated the five kings who had come to fight against the Gideonites, he makes a like appeal to the Temple copy of the Scriptures. "This is shown," he says, "by the writings laid up in the Temple." † This statement of Josephus is borne out by the Talmud (*Kelim* xv. 6), which speaks of the "Temple court copy," "from which the high priest read on the great Day of Atonement." ‡ This copy of the Sacred Scriptures was taken away by the Romans along with the other spoils of the Temple, and was displayed in the triumphal procession of Vespasian and Titus. In describing these objects, Josephus writes: "Last among these spoils was borne the Law of the Jews." He tells us also that the Emperor Vespasian built a Temple of Peace, in which he placed the Temple furniture; but that "their Law and the purple veil of the Temple were laid up in the Emperor's Palace." § The place which was given to the Sacred Books in the procession, as well as the directions issued as to their custody, show that they were the most prized of all the contents of the Temple.

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* *Antiquities of the Jews*, III., i. 7. † V., i. 17. ‡ Wildeboer, pp. 90, 91.
§ *The Wars of the Jews*, VII., v. 5, 7.

There was, consequently, a standard copy of the Old Testament. When this was carried away by the Romans, the Jews would undoubtedly take measures to have its place supplied by some authenticated copy, which had been compared with, and corrected by, that which was now removed to Rome. The fact that our present Hebrew Bibles show still one text, and one text only, may be taken as proof that the Temple copy is therein preserved, and is still in our hands. In this way we possess the very Old Testament which was in the hands of our Lord and of His apostles.

The fact, too, of the existence of that Temple copy indicates how the Canon of the Old Testament was formed. For here also the Canon was made automatically. The central place of worship—the Temple at Jerusalem—took the place which was afterwards occupied by the first Christian Churches; and just as evangelists and apostles handed the New Testament Books to the latter, so the prophets handed the Books, which were given through them by the Spirit of God, to the High Priest of the Time. The foundation of the Temple copy was made by Moses himself;* and, naturally, that course, begun with the first of the Sacred Oracles committed to Israel, was followed by all the rest. Ezra and the Jews, who returned from the Babylonish captivity, had as little to do with defining the Canon of the Old Testament as the Church Councils had to do with the canonizing of the New Testament Scriptures.

* Deuteronomy xxxi. 26.

CHAPTER XII.

The Question as to the Old Testament Settled by our Lord and His Apostles.

IT is a noteworthy fact that the critics are greatly troubled lest any question should be raised regarding the teaching of our Lord and His apostles as to the nature and the claims of the Old Testament Scriptures. They speak and write as if it were a distinct grievance that such an inquiry should be entered upon, or even suggested. This can only mean that any investigation of the kind will show that the higher criticism and our Lord are not at one on this matter. That is a momentous admission. If to take part with the higher criticism is to separate from the Son of God, who will go with it that is not prepared to abandon Him? There is surely urgent need for this inquiry, lest such a fatal renunciation as that should be made by anyone without knowing fully what his action means.

We have seen, in the preceding chapter, that the Old Testament of to-day is essentially the Bible of the Lord Jesus, and of every New Testament writer. But that this Old Testament is accepted by the New as the very Word of God will be admitted by every candid reader of the latter. There are some 500 quotations from, or distinct allusions to, the Old Testament in the New. Fifty-eight of these occur

in Matthew alone; and among them are references to every Book of the Pentateuch, to 1 Samuel and 1 Kings, to the Psalms, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, Hosea, Jonah, Micah, Zechariah, and Malachi.

We are carried beyond even this general impression when we ponder the references themselves. Let us first of all mark a few which define our Lord's position. When we come to the Sermon on the Mount—that new Law on the new Mount Sinai—we encounter a passage which has a very distinct bearing upon our inquiry. "Think not," said our Lord, "that I am come to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the Law, till all be fulfilled" (Matt. v. 17, 18). It was a not unnatural thought that the New Law was to be henceforth enough for the Church, and that the Old might be safely neglected. But this, says our Lord, is not to be imagined for a moment. The whole programme of the Gospel era, and of its triumphant consummation, is embalmed in the Old Testament. It maps out the Lord's work; and He has come not to destroy, but to fulfil, it. So fully is it God's Word that the smallest letters, yea, the marks, which distinguish one from another the letters which are otherwise alike, shall not pass away till all shall be fulfilled. The tiniest particle of that writing has its place in the expression of God's counsel and will, and it shall have its accomplishment. No doctrine of inspiration has ever been higher or more truly rational than that. To

Christ every letter of those original Scriptures was sacred, for each had its place in the revelation of the Divine mind.

In John x. 35 we meet another statement which carries us quite as far. Reasoning with the Jews, our Lord reminds them of an expression in Psalm lxxxii. They had accused Him of blasphemy because He had called Himself the Son of God. In Psa. lxxxii., princes and rulers are called "gods." The explanation seems to be that they sat in God's seat. They were the arbiters of the fate of their fellow-men. It is a great position; but it is an arrangement that is necessary for the world's best interests, and so God calls them by this name, for He has clothed them with His own authority. Our Lord therefore asks why, seeing that this mighty name is given to those "*unto whom the Word of God came*," they can accuse Him of blasphemy, from whom that Word proceeds, because He named Himself the Son of God? Now, that expression might seem at the moment an awkward one for the Jews. And, like other men in a similar difficulty, they might be inclined to set it aside, or to explain it away. Our Lord reminds them that the expression stands—that it stands unalterable. "The Scripture," He says, "cannot be broken." That is, it cannot be "loosed." It cannot be taken down and made up again. It cannot be remodelled, or retouched to suit men's changing tastes, or a Church's changing position. It cannot be altered in any way. Thus even a phrase of the Scripture is sacred, and must retain that form eternally which was given to it

at the first. From whose hand, then, did that phrase come? Can it be due to a cunning forger? or to the adapting touch of an equally dishonest editor? or even to a perfectly pure, but merely human, intention? There is only one reply possible. The Old Testament of our Lord's day, which is the Old Testament that is in our hands now, was, and is, to Him, in every part of it, the Word of God. I am quite aware that this so-called "high" doctrine of inspiration is supposed to have been put out of court. We have been told, on what is said to be "authority," that it is now quite incredible to any "intelligent" man. But, we are conducting an inquiry, and we must face the facts. There we seem to have the view of inspiration, handed down to us by the Authority of the Lord Jesus, clearly defined.

It is unnecessary to multiply proofs. The very name by which the Lord refers to the Old Testament—"The Scripture," "The Scriptures"—separates these Books from all others. His recognition of the duty to fulfil them also implies that they are the inspired and faultless expression of the Father's will (Mark xiv. 49, &c.) And the fact, that after the resurrection our Lord led the disciples back to the Old Testament, and "opened their understanding that they might understand the Scriptures" (Luke xxiv. 25), shows what those Books were to Him; and explains alike the ancient Church's power, and that fatal bankruptcy which the Church of to-day is being invited to incur. All the light, which those Teachers of the future required in order to enable them to understand the

things which had been done, and those things which were yet to be done, was there, and is there now. Whatever critics may say, or Theological Professors teach, or Clergymen and Ministers think and suggest, our Lord commits these Old Testament Books to us as a sacred treasure, to be received as wholly the Divine Word, the source to us of highest light upon the mind and will of God.

Other New Testament witness is not less clear or less emphatic. The apostle asks (Romans iii. 1, 2): "What advantage then hath the Jew, or what profit is there in circumcision?" And he replies: "Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the Oracles of God." This very word, "committed," comes into forcible collision with every theory of the origin of the Old Testament which ascribes it wholly or in part to man. It distinctly asserts that these Books were in no way a product of Jewish thought. It affirms that they were a sacred trust. For the statement is not that the Jew has this advantage over other nationalities that he *produced* the Old Testament. He has a greater honour. He was selected by God to become its custodian. We see why that word, "committed," was used when we note the terms in which the Old Testament Books are here referred to. They are "THE ORACLES *(logia)* OF GOD." The word *logion* had a well-known sense in the Greek of the time. It was the term used for a Divine communication, or a revelation from heaven. This is also the sense in which it is used in the New Testament (see Acts

vii. 38: "Who received the living Oracles to give unto us.") The plural, *logia*, therefore expresses in the strongest possible way the assurance that these are Divine revelations, and that the Old Testament Scriptures are as direct communications from God, as the Delphian responses were supposed to be from Apollo. Moses and the prophets, the intermediaries through whom these Oracles were given, were highly honoured men. But the Jews were also sharers in that honour. They, too, were intermediaries, standing between the original messengers and posterity. In this way—and in this way alone—are we able to understand the words of the apostle. Behind that question, "What advantage, then, hath the Jew?" and its answer, "Much every way; chiefly, because that unto them were committed the Oracles of God," there lies the fact that the Jew, alone of all mankind, had been selected as the medium through whom God had given these Books of the Old Testament.

That no shadow of mistake is made in this interpretation of the words is abundantly plain from other statements. The Apostle Peter, referring to Judas, says: "Men and brethren, this Scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas" (Acts i. 16). The words to which he refers are those of Psalm xli. 9: "Yea, Mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, who did eat of My bread, hath lifted up his heel against Me." Here a Psalm, which multitudes have taken to be the expression—and the merely human expression, too—of David's own

experience, is declared to be the revelation of an experience of that King who was to come—the Lord Jesus Christ. We are told that, because it was a revelation, it was impossible that it should fail to be accomplished. The story of our Redeemer had to read in that way. This had to be the Christ's cry: "Yea, Mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, who did eat of My bread, hath lifted up his heel against Me." It does not surprise us, therefore, receiving this assurance, to learn that David was not the *author* of the statement. How could *he* have foreseen, and have so clearly expressed, the experiences of One removed from his own time by nearly eleven centuries? The statement that the Holy Ghost spoke the words by the mouth of David explains this necessity for fulfilment. The Psalm was an "Oracle," a Divine revelation, a prediction of what was yet to be, and not a mere description of an experience of the Psalmist himself.

An exactly parallel statement is found in Acts iv. 25. The disciples, in their thanksgiving to God, say: "Who by the mouth of Thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things?" In this instance, the reference is to Psalm ii., a still more evident prediction of "The Son of David," but the expression is the same. Psalm xli. and Psalm ii.—the less evident prediction, and the prediction whose prophetic claims are stamped upon its every sentence—are alike the Words of God. The "mouth" is David's: the speaker is the Holy Ghost.

Some other testimonies will come before us in the next section, and we therefore limit ourselves now to 2 Timothy iii. 15, 16. Here the Scripture takes up the whole of the Old Testament Books, and describes and commends them. "Continue thou in the things which thou hast learned . . . . knowing," writes the apostle to Timothy, "that from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God" (*theopneustos*). The reader will note the phrase, "the Holy Scriptures" (*ta hiera grammata*). *Grammata* really means "letters," "written characters." One can readily understand how the expression, "written characters," came to be used in the sense of "documents," or "books," which were at that time, as in every time before printing was invented, collections of "written characters." The word is the very one used in our Lord's question: "But if ye believe not his (Moses') *writings*, how shall ye believe My words?" (John v. 47). It is plainly applied here to the whole of the Old Testament acknowledged by the Jews in the first century of the Christian era; and these are separated from all other documents, for they are *ta hiera grammata*, "the holy writings." "The holy of holies" in the temple was described as *to hieron*, "the holy place"; and what that sacred building was to the dwellings of Jerusalem, that were these Old Testament Scriptures to all other writings in possession of the Jews or of the nations.

The position of high and unparalleled sacredness

assigned to the Scriptures by this expression, is not diminished when we weigh the remainder of this important statement. Timothy might have imagined that, with the coming of the Gospel era, the use of the Old Testament was at an end. The Old Testament contained the shadow: he now possessed the substance. It set forth the coming salvation in figure: he was now face to face with the reality. Why, then, go back into the ancient dimness, instead of pressing forward into the light? Some have asked such questions, and, in after shipwreck, have presented a sad revelation of the underlying fallacy. Some are asking them to-day. "What does it matter," say they, "whether the Old Testament be fact or fiction? Let it go: we have Christ and the Gospel left." But Timothy is not to be so led away. For him, to study still, as a converted man, this same Old Testament, which he rejoiced in as a child in a Jewish home, is not to go back into dimness: it is to press forward into the light. These types, and shadows, and references to a coming glory, are *God's own exposition of the Gospel.* The Old Testament can never be left behind, for the sufficient reason that it deals with the things which are around us and before us as only the Word of God can. The Gospel has not antiquated these words written for our learning: it has furnished the key to their mysteries. These are now, as they never were before, "the holy Scriptures which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus." To let the Old Testament go is to surrender that very light and

power, without which the Church of Christ upon the earth would faint and die.

A word remains to be said on this distinct statement as to the origin and nature of the Old Testament Books. "All Scripture," or rather, "every Scripture," that is, every Book, says the apostle, "is inspired of God *(theopneustos)*, and is profitable," etc. Another rendering of the words, which has found favour with some, is, "Every Scripture, inspired of God, is also profitable," etc. (see the Revised Version). The adoption of this rendering by the Revisers recalls an old controversy. The two terms, "inspired" and "profitable," are connected by "and," and even to an unlearned reader seem plainly meant to go together, and not to be rent asunder, as is done in the new translation. Bishop Middleton, a high authority upon a matter of this kind, says: "I do not recollect any passage in the New Testament in which two adjectives, apparently connected by the copulative, were intended by the writer to be so unnaturally disjoined." * But there is little necessity for discussing which of the renderings is the better. The latter does not weaken in any way the New Testament witness to the Old; for the words—unless they are to be taken as a mere platitude—would plainly mean: "every Scripture, seeing that it is inspired of God, is also profitable," etc. The inspiration of the Scripture would in this way be mentioned as the explanation of its profitableness. The apostle has already defined the

* *Doctrine of the Greek Article*, p. 391.

"writings" to which he refers. They are the Old Testament of the first century of the Christian era—the Bible of the Jew then and now. Instead of repeating the plural, "the Scriptures," he uses the singular, "every Scripture," thus referring to these writings individually; and he tells us that every Book is inspired of God. There is nothing superfluous in the Scripture. Every portion of it has been given because God's eye has rested upon some section of the vast field of human need. He has placed there the answer of Divine grace and wisdom; and hence every part of it is profitable for the discipline and the equipment of the man who will live the Christ-like life, who will give himself to God's service and take his part in God's battle.

All this is driven home by the word *theopneustos*, which is rendered "inspired of God." It means, literally, "God-breathed." It is an unusual word, and is evidently chosen to express the utterly unique character of the Scripture. As God "breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul" (Genesis ii. 7), so God breathed into the Scripture, and it became "the Word of God which liveth and abideth for ever." Man cannot be confounded with the creation of which he forms part; and quite as little can this Book be confounded with the literature by which it is surrounded. As man became "a living *soul*"—became living intellect and all that we indicate by mind and heart and will; became a human personality with wide outlook, clear insight, and regal instincts—so this God-

breathed Scripture assumed that place of unapproached spiritual purity, and grandeur, and power which every age has acknowledged. Had man been all that God made him at the first, the Scripture would even then have been among books, what man possessed of God's image would have been in the midst of creation.

Such, then, is the decision of this great controversy. The Old Testament of to-day is the very Old Testament of which our Lord and the inspired writers of the New Testament have said these things. To him, who accepts the New Testament, and trusts in the Redeemer whom it reveals, there is but one side in this struggle. He has no choice but to rank himself with those who believe and maintain the genuineness and Divine authority of the entire Old Testament Scripture.

WHY HAS GOD GIVEN US THE BIBLE?

CHAPTER I.

The Answer of the Old Testament.

WHY has God given us the Bible? This is the question which meets us when we have marked how, and from whom, the Bible has come to us. If God has in very truth performed this miracle—if holy men of God spake as they were borne along by the Holy Spirit—then we may rest assured that the Bible supplies a want which nothing else can satisfy.

The exact service which the Bible is intended to render, and our consequent interest and duty to avail ourselves of that service, will be best understood by turning to what the Bible has itself said upon this matter. It seems to me that the first hint of an answer was given in the Divine directions regarding that nucleus of revelation, the Decalogue written with God's own finger upon the two tables of stone (Exodus xxxi. 18). Moses was commanded to place these in the ark: "And thou shalt put into the ark the testimony which I shall give thee" (Exodus xxv. 16). That was spoken regarding the destination of the two first tables, which Moses destroyed when he was confronted by the daring idolatry of his people. The

same directions were renewed, however, when the new tables were written: "At that time the Lord said unto me, Hew thee two tables of stone like unto the first, and come up unto Me into the Mount, and make thee an ark of wood. And I will write on the tables the words that were in the first tables which thou brakest, and thou shalt put them in the ark" (Deut. x. 1, 2). This repeated command, we are also informed, was fulfilled; "And he took and put the testimony into the ark" (Exodus xl. 20).

The research, which has shed so much light upon the religion of ancient Egypt, has now helped us to understand the message of this symbolism. The Israelitish worship is so entirely apart from and above the Egyptian that no Egyptologist can entertain the notion for a moment that the former was borrowed from the latter. But God spoke to the reflective Israelite through these symbols of His Law. The ark in the Egyptian Temple was the dwelling place of the god. It was the place of its presence: the god was enshrined in the ark. How far the religion of Israel soared above the religion of Egypt is indicated in the fact that God was not represented as enshrined in the ark. The glory of the living God rested upon it. But, nevertheless, the putting of the Law in this sacred receptacle had its significance; for the act signified to these Israelites, with their Egyptian training, that here was the central glory of all their sacred endowments. This was the link which connected man with God. It proclaimed that, if man would meet with God, here was the meeting place.

For this Law, it seemed to say, was God expressed and revealed. And let it be remembered that this place of revealing is *a Law*. To meet with God is to meet with One who speaks to our heart and assumes control of our life—One whose "Thou shalt not" and "Thou shalt" proclaim Him our Creator and our Father. The place of converse becomes a place of obedience—rather let us say a place of fellowship, a taking of God's way, a walking with Him in the path of His commandments.

That is the first indicated answer to our question as to the use of the Bible. The expression of this truth becomes fuller as we read on. In the concluding chapters of Deuteronomy we find the words:

> "And Moses wrote this law, and delivered it unto the priests the sons of Levi, which bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and unto all the elders of Israel. And Moses commanded them, saying, At the end of every seven years, in the solemnity of the year of release, in the feast of tabernacles, when all Israel is come to appear before the Lord thy God in the place which He shall choose, thou shalt read this law before all Israel in their hearing. Gather the people together, men, and women, and children, and thy stranger that is within thy gates, that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear the Lord your God, and observe to do all the words of this law: and that their children, which have not known anything, may hear, and learn to fear the Lord your God, as long as ye live in the land whither ye go over Jordan to possess it" (Deuteronomy xxxi. 9-13).

The reader will note the emphasis that is thrown

upon the great end which is to be attained in this repeated public reading of the Law. It will consecrate God's people. It will fill them with that holy fear of God which will keep the wayward heart perpetually in God's presence. "Thou shalt read this law before all Israel in their hearing . . . that they may hear, and may learn, and fear the Lord your God, and observe to do all the words of this law." And their children, who had seen nothing of the marvels of Sinai, would nevertheless meet God here: "And that their children, who have not known anything, may hear, and learn to fear the Lord your God, as long as ye live in the land whither ye go over Jordan to possess it." This last intimation is specially noteworthy. God (it seems to say) is revealed in His Word as marvellously as at Sinai. Man's heart recognises here the voice of his Creator, his Judge, his Father—the God of unswerving righteousness, yet also "the Father of mercies and the God of all consolation." The Bible thus became to Israel the cement of national life, and of all relationships. It linked together parent and child, husband and wife, master and servant, leaders and people. And it did this by bringing each man, woman, and child into immediate touch with God. The Israelitish religion was full of elaborate ritual; but this hearing of the Law brings them in past all ceremonies. The Israelite is brought in past the very priesthood, and is set in the immediate presence of Jehovah. Ceremonies and priests will afterwards minister to the people; but they will minister to them because the

people have, first of all, received that which neither ceremony nor priest can bestow. The Israelite is to hear *God's* voice: the Lord is to speak with *him;* and this personal knowledge and fear of the Lord is to be the light in which the Israelite walks, and the very air which he breathes.

Men have laughed at a Book religion. They have spoken of a revelation of God through a Book as one of the vainest of imaginations. How did they happen to forget the fact that the kings of literature exert their influence and perpetuate their reign through their books? Still more strange was it that they failed to take note of their own hope, that by means of a book they would possess the hearts of others with the contempt and the passion which filled their own! God is in His Word; and He lives and rules in men as they acquaint themselves with it. We have glimpses of this truth again and again in Israel's history. We think of those heroic men who crossed the Jordan—those "Ironsides" of the time. We remember Samuel and David, and prophets and kings besides, whose record is only an indication of many an unwritten page in the nation's history. And here we learn from the words, inscribed upon the very foundation of Revelation, that all this was intended from the first. The Book was given that its simple, but direct and living, ministry might bind the ages together in the Divine fellowship.

In the very next Book of Scripture—that of Joshua—we encounter a word concerning the Law which carries us farther. At the close of the Divine instructions given him for his great enterprise are these:

"Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest. This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth: but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success" (Joshua i. 7, 8).

This conquest of the land, and the settlement of Israel in it, was a mighty task. And here one is selected for it, not from the great personalities of the time, but, as we may say, from among the people. The call awakes in Joshua a crushing sense of unfitness. But, nevertheless, he stands at the commencement of a career which is not to be marred by a single failure. Next to Moses, his departed master, this servant of his will be the greatest figure in Israelitish history. And how is this marvel to be wrought? What is it that will transform this man, that will endow him with unfailing wisdom, and clothe him with unchallengeable pre-eminence? Here is the answer. Joshua is not to take his own way. He is not to devise and to follow his own methods. He is not to meditate upon what will best serve the interests of Israel and to seek its attainment. His is a humbler but surer, and, in the end, grander, way. He is to be, in very truth, what he is named—God's *servant*. The Lord has cared for everything, and has already laid down the way to its accomplishment. Joshua's

one duty is to fall into line with God's requirements.

In other words, Joshua is to be possessed by the Divine Law. But how will that be brought about? God's message has already provided the reply. The Law is not to depart out of his mouth. This does not mean that he is to be always speaking about it. It means rather that he is to feed upon it perpetually. It is to be the bread of his mind, and heart, and soul. The next words explain this by saying: "Thou shalt meditate therein day and night." And thus we are indebted for the Joshua we know to that Bible. Without it everything would have been different. There would have been nothing of the indwelling of the Spirit of God which manifested itself in word and act. Bereft of the felt presence of God, Joshua might have given way to pleasure, or to covetousness, or to the masterfulness and caprice so natural to the consciousness of power. But this Book shut him in with God. He fed upon it; the Word was in his mouth. He fed upon it night and day. When the words lay no longer under his eye they were in his thoughts. He clung to the Book, and the Book gripped him. He strove to get into the heart of that wondrous Law, and the light and power of it entered into him; and there lay the secret of that noble life, and faithful service, and wide, enduring influence. Joshua used the Bible, and the God of the Bible used and ennobled him.

There are many other references to the Scripture in the Old Testament; but I confine myself to two which

are found in the Psalms. In Psalm i. we have a description of the man of God which recalls the word to Joshua:

> "His delight is in the law of the Lord; and in His law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper" (verses 2, 3).

The picture is full of suggestion. The tree is planted upon "the divisions of waters," that is, the small rivulets with which the Eastern husbandmen irrigate those portions of their ground which require special care. The neighbouring river has been used to give fruitfulness to this spot. Water has been led to it from the higher part of the river's course. It is dispersed through a number of channels; and, then, having run through these, it flows gently along to join the river again in a lower part of its course. As you look upon the place you feel that the tree has been cared for. Someone with knowledge and skill has planned, and toiled, and done his best for it. The fittest means have been taken to fill all its cells with the needful sap. The soil is loosened, too, by the moisture, so that the tender rootlets make their way in the darkness beneath to the things from which they drink in strength, sending it up into trunk, and branch, and twig, and leaf above. The best of which that tree is capable will thus be attained. The ideal in the mind of its Creator—the purpose for which it was made—will be fulfilled. And so the great

Husbandman has made provision for the trees of His planting. He has supplied in the Scripture—even in the Law—what is needed for ministering sap to expanding spiritual life, and for extracting new strength even from those dark and hard surroundings in which that life is set. It is in this way that character is built up, and that fitness is acquired to bear fruit in its season—to say the fitting word and to do the fitting deed.

But even the tree has to reach down to drink of the ministered strength; and the promise here is not to the man who knows about the Word, or who values it, and withstands its assailants, and is even ready to die for it. Its ministry is for him who *reads*: and who reads to purpose. The Scripture spurns any merely liturgical use of it, private or other. The promise is to him who has tasted and seen that this Word is good, and who seeks to penetrate still more deeply into its meaning. Over him heaven is breaking into joy even now. "Oh the blessednesses of the man . . . whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who *meditates* in His law day and night. *He* shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season: his leaf also shall not wither, and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper."

The other Old Testament suggestion of the purpose for which God has given the Scripture, to which I ask the reader's attention, is that in Psalm xix. One of the most marvellous things in connection with these indications is the intensely spiritual use which the

Scripture is meant to serve. That characteristic is specially conspicuous in this Psalm. The first part (verses 1-6) speaks of the glory of God manifested in the starry host, in the mighty expanse—the firmament—in which they are placed, and specially in the sun, the source of our earth's light, and heat, and vital influences. The latter part of the Psalm (verses 7-11) sets forth what we owe to that sun of the Spiritual firmament—"The law of the Lord." A comparison is here plainly intended between the realms of nature and of grace; but when we set the two parts of the Psalm side by side, we are compelled to notice the incompleteness of the parallel. In the second part we have indeed the Sun of the spiritual firmament—the Scripture; but where are those things which correspond with the starry host and the firmament? There is absolute silence regarding these in vers. 7-11.

This is one of those Scripture difficulties which arrest thought and reward reflection. Will the reader note that it is *the eloquence* of these stars which repeat the sun's glory and of that firmament which it illumines, to which our attention is directed? "The heavens *declare* the glory of God; and the firmament *showeth* his handywork." Their testimony is persistent and eloquent. "Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge." But the testimony, while effective, is also *silent:* "There is no speech nor language, their voice is not heard;" yet "their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world." To this there seems at first, as has just been said, to be

no parallel in the second division of the Psalm. But what have we in its last three verses? There is the soul's cry for light—"Who can understand his errors? cleanse Thou me from secret faults. Keep back Thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression" (12, 13). And when we ask what the outcome of that fervent desire will be, who can fail to recall these other words of the Old Testament: "And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever" (Daniel xii. 3)? Is it a strained interpretation which finds this missing parallel in ourselves, and that *we* are the firmament and the stars which are enlightened by this spiritual Sun—the Bible? If not, then it is ours to declare God's glory and to show His handiwork, so that day unto day will utter speech, and night unto night will show forth knowledge. And when the earthly service is over, our glory, unlike that of the material universe, will abide. "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever."*

This analogy, however, though it is suggested, does not disturb in any way the description of the Law which follows. "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul" (ver. 7). It is this absolute perfectness of the Scripture which makes it the one Book for humanity. It judges me. I see my im-

* Compare Proverbs iv. 18, and Matthew xiii. 43.

perfections, and my soul is smitten. My unconcern vanishes. My frivolous indifference is at an end. I am bowed down at God's feet, but with my face towards the mercy-seat, and with the cry on my lips: "God be merciful to me a sinner!" That is the beginning of the new life. I am separated from the careless, unthinking crowd, and I am set in the presence of God.

Whom the Word turns it also leads. "The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple" (verse 7). *Eduth*, "testimony," comes from *ūd*, "to say again and again." It is *the repetition* of the counsels of Scripture that is here emphasised. *Pethi* means "simple;" but also "a simpleton, a fool." What case to an instructor seems more hopeless than his? Touched for the moment, the impression vanishes more swiftly than it was made. But the repeated testimony of the Word will steady even him; and thus it changes the simpleton into a man of wisdom. In that setting of a childlike spirit, the wisdom may have more of the Divine glory about it than if it were enshrined in intellectual greatness.

We need not now study the words minutely. It is enough to note that this Word not only converts and establishes: it also meets all our need:

> "The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter

also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them is Thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward" (Psalm xix. 8-11).

There are those who have attempted to compare Hinduism with Christianity to the detriment of the latter. There is one thing of which they may be reminded. The Hindu Shasters and the Scripture both inculcate meditation. The Brahmin who would attain perfection must penetrate beyond the letter of the Shasters and get to know their spiritual meaning. He must, in particular, meditate long and devoutly on "the sacred syllable OM in each of its three letters and their meaning, as well as the combined meaning of the whole." Here are the directions for the aspirant after Hindu bliss—the annihilation of individual existence: "Curbing the senses and appetites, and breathing gently though the nostrils, while meditating, the scholar should concentrate his thoughts. On a clean, smooth spot, free from pebbles, from gravel, or from scorching sand, where the mind is tranquilised by pleasant sounds, by running water and grateful shade, with nought to offend his eye, let him apply himself to his task."*

Of such mystical irrationality there is not a trace in the Scripture. There meditation is simply the pondering and the keeping in the heart of words which we desire to yield their meaning and their guidance. From them will spring light upon God's nature, and counsels, and direction for the way. And let it be remarked how fully the spiritual service of

* Mullens. *Religious Aspects of Hindu Philosophy*, pp. 120, 121.

this Law of the Lord is grasped from the very beginning. The Jew used, and uses still, its words as a charm. With some of these sacred sentences written out on parchment and worn about his person, he imagines himself secure against misfortune. There is not the faintest trace here of superstition of that, or of any other, sort. How did the Scripture escape a yoke under which every people of the time was weighed heavily down, and whence had it this clear insight into the spiritual blessings which it alone can bestow? How comes it that this is its one all-engrossing theme throughout this magnificent description? These are questions to which the higher criticism, like every other form of unbelief, has no answer. There is really only one reply—it is that to which right reason and faith alike cordially assent—that the Scripture is literally "the Word of God."

CHAPTER II.

The New Testament Reply.

WHEN we turn to the New Testament statement of the purpose for which the Gospels are given, we note a change, which is quite in keeping with the altered circumstances. God had appeared at Sinai to the entire Israelitish people, and not to Moses only. The whole nation were, consequently, God's witnesses. Hence the call to Israel is not so much *to believe*, as to read, to meditate, and to obey.

Those, however, who even in the first age of the Gospel Dispensation had seen the Lord Jesus, and still more those who had seen and heard the risen Christ, formed a very small minority. When we add to this that the Gospel calls us to receive not a law merely, but a full salvation—a gift of everlasting life—we at once understand how the call to believe should be added and emphasised. The stream of Gospel blessing flows on now, as it flowed at the first, "from faith to faith."

This helps us to appreciate the force of Luke's words to Theophilus in the beginning of his Gospel. The purpose of his writing is, he says, "that thou mightest know the certainty of those things wherein thou hast been instructed."* There were in existence, as he has just before told us, a number of accurate, and orderly, accounts of what the apostles had taught about the sayings, the deeds, the death, and the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. But something more was needed to still questioning, to banish doubt, and to inspire a reader with the strong, joyous, assurance of faith. And so Luke, having been endowed "from on high" with a "perfect understanding of all things," enters this field to give an absolutely certain testimony —the testimony of God regarding His Son. Luke's Gospel (and in this it is but the type of all of the Gospels) exists, therefore, not to satisfy curiosity, but to form a basis for our trust. The Book is not a collection of human impressions about Jesus: it is a revelation of Him. We actually company with Him

* See p. 66.

here. We see Him: we hear His voice. We behold Him die: we gaze on Him risen from the dead and alive for evermore.

The same note is struck in the last verse of the twentieth chapter of John's Gospel. This is taken by our critical friends as the original conclusion of the fourth Gospel, and they insist upon this view of theirs in spite of the distinct explanation (ver. 30) that the evangelist is here dealing only with the things which Jesus did "in the presence of His disciples." These belong to the record of the risen life of Jesus; for it was only after His resurrection that the ministry of Jesus was confined to the circle of the disciples. The words (verse 31): "But these things are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that, believing, ye might have life through His name," are the climax of the chapter. We have, first of all, Mary's grief changed to joy by the manifestation of the Risen Lord (vers. 11-18). Then we have the despair of the disciples turned into rejoicing (19-23). Last of all, the loving, but incredulous, Thomas enters also into that gladness which swallows up his unbelief for ever. "Then saith He to Thomas. Reach hither thy finger, and behold My hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into My side: and be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto Him, My Lord, and my God! Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed" (verses 24-29). And now come the words which

address us: "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that, believing, ye might have life through His name" (verses 30, 31.) The joy is to flow on. It is to enter into *us*, as into Mary and into the disciples, and even into unbelieving Thomas. For it is upon *us* that the Lord's eye rested when He said: "Blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed;" and, as we are possessed by the conviction that this is indeed the Messiah who came the first time to reconcile us unto God through His atonement for sin, and who will by-and-bye fulfil the promise enshrined in this fourth Gospel, and will come again and receive us unto Himself, that where He is there we may be also (xiv. 1-3), we have life through His name. To minister that faith to us, who have not seen Jesus, the Gospel was written. If it fail to impart this, the Book has missed its end: its purpose is frustrated. The use of the New Testament is to beget the assurance of faith, and to evoke that triumphant joy which lifts its praise to heaven, which treads the daily path with firm assurance, and which looks on with eyes aflame with the heaven-lit fire of hope.

But there is a hint in this fourth gospel which takes us farther. The Lord Jesus is spoken of in its commencement as "The Word." This striking expression has had less attention drawn to it because of the discussions which its use has aroused in the learned world. Both preachers and other students of

Scripture have felt themselves to be here on the edge of an abyss into which it would be madness for them to venture. But it is now largely admitted that the use of this word in John has nothing whatever to do with the speculations of Philo. And the Scripture itself, indeed, gives us all the light we require. In the opening of Luke's Gospel the term is used in the same way. That evangelist speaks of those (the apostles) "who from the beginning were eye-witnesses and ministers of the Word" (i. 2). Here the term is plainly used to denote a Person; for, though the apostles could easily be, and were, the servants or ministers of the Scripture or the Gospel message, they could not be spoken of as "eye-witnesses" of either. When the Lord returns to execute the long-delayed judgment upon the nations, we read that He assumes this name: "And He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and His name is called the Word of God" (Revelation xix. 13). This evidently indicates that in some way *Jesus is identified with the Scripture.* Coming to fulfil the Scripture, the Lord displays it invested with a Divinity that even the best have only dimly perceived. The Scripture is so filled with Christ, and is so much His instrument in Hi revealing, redeeming, sanctifying, work that its name becomes His own.

Startling as this thought is, it seems marvellous that it should be new to any reader of the Bible. Is it not in these words of the Apostle Peter: "Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come

unto you: searching what, or what manner of time THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow" (1 Peter i. 10, 11)? It was the Spirit of Christ that inspired the prophets. The Spirit of God was communicating to them *Christ's* message. This truth removes a difficulty in the same Epistle over which many have stumbled to the injury of themselves and others: "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins . . . being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: by which also He went and preached . . . when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah" (iii. 18-20). The Lord Jesus spoke through His servant Noah. It was Christ who, by His Spirit, was pleading in mercy with men then, just as, by His Spirit, He is pleading now with men rushing madly upon a like judgment.

There are yet other passages which have the closest bearing upon this matter. Those which we have just looked at identify Christ with the *substance* of the Scripture, but not necessarily perhaps with its present form. But in the Book of Revelation our Lord describes Himself as "Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending" (i. 8; see also ver. 11; also xxi. 6, and xxii. 13). It has been supposed that, as Alpha is the first letter of the Greek alphabet, and Omega the last letter of it, the phrase simply means "the first and the last." But this it can hardly mean, seeing that we have these very words added, as in xxii. 13: "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and

the end, and the first and the last." These letters of the Alphabet *have to do with writing*. Is it going too far to suggest that our Lord here underlines, as it were, and invests with startling majesty this unheeded and despised written Word which He will yet descend from heaven to fulfil? But whatever may be our interpretation of the words, "I am Alpha and Omega," it cannot be denied that Christ's presence in, and perpetual ministry through, the Scripture is the teaching of the New Testament.

When John speaks, therefore, in the beginning of his Gospel, of everything with which Christ has had, and has now, to do, how could he omit mention of the Scripture? That glorious gift of God, that fount of light, and blessing, and spiritual strength, could not be left unnoticed. Yes, the Word could not be passed over; but while Christ made all other things, this is bound up with Himself, and so He is named by it. That thought was grasped by the men of the early Church. We find it still illuminating the days of Ambrose. He says: "Holy Scripture edifies everyone! We speak to Christ when we pray; we listen to Him when we read the Scripture."* That, then, is the message hid in this name of Jesus. It explains that mysterious, unique, influence which the lightest word of the Bible has upon our spirits. And so, when we ask why God has given us the Bible, this is part of the answer. The Scripture has been given that we might have fellowship with Christ—even fellowship like theirs who heard Him, and beheld Him with their eyes, and

* On the office of the ministry. B.I.

whose hands handled Him (1 John i. 1). Dost thou wish to see Jesus?—to sit like Mary at His feet, hearing His Word?—to lean like John upon His breast? It is not impossible: it is not even hard of attainment. "The Word is nigh thee." Here is the door: here is the presence chamber. It is in thine opened Bible!

CHAPTER III.

The New Testament Reply.

(Continued.)

THERE are statements of the Scriptures which give a startling significance to that surrender of the Bible which is so marked a feature of our time. We have already noted the words of Psalm xix.: "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul." The New Testament emphasises this truth, indicating repeatedly that the Scripture plays a vital part in the very commencement of the Christian life. "For though ye have ten thousand instructers in Christ," says Paul to the Corinthian Church, "yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you THROUGH THE GOSPEL" (1 Cor. iv. 15). In James we read: "Of His own will begat He us WITH THE WORD OF TRUTH" (i. 18); and in 1 Peter the same truth is set before us in the familiar words: "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by THE WORD OF GOD, which

liveth and abideth for ever" (i. 23). It would appear as if the Churches were placid spectators of a conspiracy against the majesty of Divine truth. They witness the progress of the attempt to substitute corruptible seed for the incorruptible, and make no sign that they apprehend the gravity of the experiment. These Scriptures tell us that their action means consent to the abandonment of the Church's service in the work of regeneration. It is this despised and surrendered word of the Bible that is the seed of the new life. If that seed is not cast into the field of humanity, whence shall we expect the harvest for which God and the world wait?

The part played by the Scripture in the regeneration of mankind is further described in the exhortation: "Wherefore, laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, as new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby" (1 Peter ii. 1, 2). The Scripture is, consequently, as necessary for the growth of the higher life as for its beginning. The apostle names the things which had previously been the daily food of the mind and of the heart, and which had been turned into the man's life-blood, as it were, and been built into his character and being. These are to be put aside. Turning away from all badness, and all cunning, and hypocrisies—the acting of a part, the pretending to be what he is not—and from envies, and every kind of evilspeaking—a vice which seeks to cling to the new man as it has lorded it over the old man—he is to take the food specially pre-

pared for the infancy of the new life—the undiluted, uncontaminated "Word-milk." This will impart satisfaction and strength to the babes in Christ. We think out and we adopt many schemes to interest and attract the young, to attach them to the Church, and to prepare them to take their part by-and-bye in church service. Will anything prove more attractive than the food which the all-wise Creator has furnished? Can anything appeal to them more strongly than that which meets the deepest need of the new nature? And can anything be devised which will form nobler or more Christlike character? Let the Churches loyally give themselves to the simple ministration of the Word for a generation, and the result will be such an army as the world has not seen for seventeen centuries.

When we look forward to the maturer days of the Christian life, and ask what will prepare for active work, the Scripture has but one reply. It is still—"the Word." This has not only milk for babes: it has also strong meat for men. We recall the counsel given to Timothy: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Timothy iii. 16, 17). Here the Scriptures are commended to us *in their totality*. "*All* Scripture is inspired of God." We have our likings and our preferences in regard to the Scriptures as in regard to everything besides. Some are attracted to the Psalms; some delight in the Gospels. But

God leads us past our limitations; and so He has provided what will awaken our slumbering powers, and endow us with new aptitudes. Those parts of Scripture which are dark and unattractive to us are charged to convey something which no other part can supply; and it is a something without which we shall be poorer than God desires we should be.

Glance now at what comes to us through this use of "all Scripture." It is profitable first for "doctrine"—that is, for instruction. There is much that we need to know. We want right thought about God. We desire that He, in whom we live and move and have our being, shall be more than a name to us. We want to know what shall make us unable to forget Him, a joy to remember Him, a delight to serve Him, an impossibility not to trust Him. We want to know man, to see in him a being made for eternity. We seek to realise his peril, to feel the grandeur of his possibilities. We need to know the past, and to see the issue of that long and wide experiment in living to which man everywhere has given himself. Do I ask how I shall attain all this, and serve myself heir to the ages? Here is the reply—all I want is in the Scripture: it is "profitable for instruction."

But many things instruct which carry me no farther. I require more than instruction if the lesson imparted is to come home to me, if the truth manifested is to abide with me and to rule over me. But this need also is met by the Bible as I find it met nowhere besides. "The Scripture is profitable . . . for reproof;" that is, for *conviction*. It grips

us. When it has caught and riveted our attention —when it has uttered its parable—it has one word more to add. It has so far been bending its bow; and now the arrow is shot home. The startled soul hears the word: "Thou art the man;" and it has no reply but instant submission and bitter entreaty. But even now, when we are instructed and convicted, we have not reached the end of our necessity. The penitent does not seek pardon only: he must have guidance and help. But for this he must still have recourse to the Scripture. It "is profitable . . for correction." The word means "making-straight," and the statement is that the Scripture is profitable for amendment, for rectification. It is impossible for the man, who has been convicted of sin by the Word of God, to retain that sin and still be a reader of the Scripture. He will be compelled to choose between the two masters. If he keeps to the Bible, the sin must go; if he retains the sin, the Bible must be surrendered. Its instruction and conviction have had this very thing in view. It cuts us out from the old that it may establish us in the new.

To this it is added that "the Scripture is profitable . . . . for instruction (or rather, discipline) in righteousness." We are in God's school; we are sons and daughters in God's Home. And what son is he whom the Father chasteneth not? As we read these Books of the Bible, the chastisement of Him who, like the compassionate and skilful surgeon, wounds that He may heal, will be felt on this side and on that. But blessed are those strokes; for this is

"discipline in righteousness." Our failure is disclosed and we are smitten that we may be perfected—"that the man of God"—the man who will exist for Him, who will bear His message, who will live to assist in His work—"may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works." Where will the Churches find a substitute for the Bible, when their "experts" have broken the faith of the ministry in it, and when it is no longer expounded and enforced as the Word of the living God?

But there is another aspect of the Christian life. We have entered upon a campaign. We are combatants in a war in which blows have to be received and given. The reward is the conquest of that enduring possession which God has given us. What will arm us, then, for this warfare? In Hebrews iv. we have an answer to our question. In the former half of the chapter the Scripture proceeds upon an implied parallel between us and the Israelites, who were led out of Egypt by Moses. They were delivered from bondage and wretchedness, but not to be sent adrift outside the borders of Egypt. They had a special destination distinctly in view from the first—the land promised of old to the Fathers. But Canaan was even then only a type of what the believer in God attained—namely, God's salvation. For as Israel received "great and goodly cities" which it had not built, "and houses full of all good things" which it did not fill, and wells digged, and vineyards, and olive-trees, in the preparation of which it had taken no part, so we enter into a perfect righteousness

for which we have not worked, and into pardon of sins for which no sufferings of ours have presented an atonement. And the parallel holds throughout. Through the possession of the land with the revelation which it brought of God's faithfulness, and omnipotence, and abundant graciousness, they were enabled to enter into God's rest, that joy in attained purpose, that full satisfaction in good to which nothing has to be added. But, to attain this rest, Israel had to conquer the land. Step by step they took possession by overcoming and extirpating those who held the land against them; and we, too, have foes to meet and slay in order that we may enter upon our possession and that this rest in God may be ours.

Our question recurs, therefore—with what weapon shall we be armed that we may triumph in this warfare? The Scripture replies:

> "The Word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do" (verses 12, 13).

We require but one weapon. It was that used by the Lord in the wilderness, on the mountain, and on the Temple pinnacle. The instant it flashed forth there was victory. When the Word of God is grasped, it is discovered to be "quick," that is, "alive." The warrior's sword is a dead thing. His strength and

skill have to impart life to it. But this sword lives; and it is not only "living," it is "powerful," or rather, "energising." If we but grasp this sure and trusty weapon, it will put life into *us*. We shall join the battle-line, and this blade will flash and smite. And it is resistless. "It is sharper than any two-edged sword." Whichever side falls it cuts, and cuts with a keenness that is a new revelation of power. The possessor of a mighty weapon of old became the hero of story and of song; and this sword makes grander heroes. It pierces "to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit." The spirit-life which, like Lazarus, has made answer to the voice of the Son of God and come forth from the tomb, is caught, and hampered, and hindered, by the lusts of the flesh and of the mind—the soul. And, like Lazarus, it has to be loosed and set free. What will sever its bonds? The Word of God—the Sword of the Spirit. The next words, which speak of the separating of the joints and the marrow, seem to have had light shed upon them by recent research. *Muelos*, the word rendered "marrow," and which has also that meaning in Greek, has a special sense besides. It was applied to the brain substance and the spinal chord. These are the nerve centres. The joints are "the joinings," by means of which these nerve centres communicate with the mind and will. As the electric bell keeps ringing while the connection holds between the current and the bell, but ceases instantly when the connection is interrupted; so desire and passion keep ringing in the soul, urging us to surrender. We

know that surrender is wrong; is deadly. We argue; we resolve; we intrench ourselves behind our determination. But we are plied with fresh representations. Compliance, we are assured, is justifiable; is as innocent as it is pleasant. We waver; our resolution melts away. What will save us? One sweep of this all-conquering sword, and the connection is cut. It pierces to the dividing asunder of the joinings and the nerve centres. The urgent solicitation, the driving force of sin, ceases instantly, and the soul is delivered like a bird from the snare of the fowler. Let the tempted one but open his Bible, or recall the Scripture, and the heart, but the moment before fired with passion, becomes as cold to the temptation as the dead.

The remaining words complete the marvellous picture of the achievements of the Scripture in this warfare with sin. It is a "critic"—a discerner—of the thoughts and intents of the heart. When it has saved from the assault of the foe, it will cleanse the habitation within. It will deal now with the well-springs of our thought, and separate between the good and the bad. It will winnow our very thoughts. And nothing can escape from its condemnation. "Neither is there any created thing that is not manifest in His sight, but all things are naked and with outstretched neck to His eyes with whom we have to do." The figure is that of a sacrifice at the altar. The cord attached to the horns was pulled back; the animal's neck, stretched tight, was severed at the first touch of the sharp priestly knife, and the life stream

was poured out before the altar. So the disguise of every wrong and base thing vanishes away as this Word of God confronts it. And not only so, but it also stands with outstretched neck ready for the death-stroke. This marvellous deliverance has been, is, and will be, the portion of those who hide this word in their heart that they offend not against Him, who has called them out of darkness into His marvellous light.

Two other passages will complete our survey. We find in 2 Peter i. 19, that the Word is needed for the daily pathway. "We have also a more sure word of prophecy, unto which ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light which shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn and the day-star arise in your hearts." The "dark" place is "squalid" or "filthy," as well as "dark." We are passing through a country abounding in pollutions. On every hand of us, and right in front of us, there lie abominations. One unwary step and we shall put our foot upon them, and their stench will cling to us. We need a light that we may pick our steps; and here it is: "Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Psa. cxix. 105).

The other is Ephesians v. 25, 26: "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify it and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word" ——literally—"that He might cleanse it, having washed it in the laver of water in the Word." The mention of "the laver" takes us back to the Tabernacle. There the laver stood between the altar and

the Holy Place; and in that laver the priest had to wash that he die not (Exodus xxx. 20). When we recall the Scripture which tells us that the Church is the Lord's body, the meaning of the figure is clear. As the priest washed his flesh in the laver, so the Lord cleanses us, *His* flesh, for service in the Tabernacle, and that He may at last present us in the presence of the Father's glory without blemish and without spot. The water in this laver is "the Word." It is by opening our understanding to perceive the meaning of the Scripture, and by applying it, thus understood, to heart and conscience that we are purged from spot and stain. The Lord takes us thither: He brings us to the Word; and with His own hand the water is cast upon the things that offend, until spot and stain diminish and disappear. Without this Word, as we have seen, the appointed means of regeneration is wanting to the world; and if the Church's faith in it be destroyed, then the means are also lacking which God has appointed for the perfecting of His saints.

THE BIBLE A PLANNED BOOK.

AS we take up the Bible and open its pages, with a view to its more thorough study, we are arrested by one striking and suggestive fact. The greatest pains are being taken by the higher critics to break down the old conception of the Scriptures, and especially to make an end of the notion that the Scriptures form a unity. The very title, "The Bible," is strongly objected to, on the ground that it suggests that these sixty-six Books of the Old and the New Testaments are really one Book, containing the beginning, the middle, and the end, of a continuous and completed story. How vital it is for them to abolish that notion of the Scriptures is plain to every one. A Book of that kind, to which so many pens and so many ages have contributed, could only be a unity because of the control and guidance of a Mind which retained its vigour, and steadily pursued its purpose, over the enormous space of 1600 years, and, even according to critical reckoning, for more than 800 years! In other words, the unity of the Bible would still prove its full Divine inspiration after criticism had done its worst.

We are accordingly told that the Bible is a collection of books, but not, in any proper sense of the term, a book. In that work of Dr. Driver's, to the seeming moderation of which we owe so much of the

present declension, the new conception is quietly insinuated. His book, instead of being named, as has hitherto been customary even in Germany: "An Introduction to the Old Testament," bears the title: *An Introduction to THE LITERATURE of the Old Testament.* But this attempt to sink the Bible to the level of other books is confronted by enormous difficulties. For one thing, if there existed other Hebrew literature, the question must be faced why this particular portion of it was selected; why it remained separate from all the rest; and why it was elevated unchallenged to this lofty place. And that other literature did exist it would be vain to deny. The second Book of the Maccabees is a confessed abridgement of an older and more voluminous work. After a reference to the nature of the events which he is about to record, the author says: "All such things, as have been comprised in five books by Jason of Cyrene, we will attempt to abridge in one book" (2 Maccabees ii. 23).

There is a similar hint of the existence of other "Hebrew literature" given by the earlier writer to whom we owe the Book of 1 Maccabees. It closes with these words: "And the rest of the acts of John, and of his wars, and of his valiant deeds which he did, and of the building of the walls which he built, and of his doings, behold they are written in the chronicles of his high-priesthood, from the time that he was made high priest after his father" (1 Maccabees xvi. 23, 24). We have a still earlier writer in the Greek translator of the apocryphal work, Ecclesiasticus. He

indicates that many pens were busy in the time of his grandfather, the author of that work. "Since," he says, "they that love learning must be able to profit them who are without, both by speaking and writing, my grandfather Jesus, having much given himself to the reading of the Law, and the prophets, and the other books of our fathers, and having gained great familiarity therewith, was drawn on also himself to write somewhat pertaining to instruction and wisdom."

We discover similar indications of a literary activity all through Israel's recorded history. It appears to have been the custom in the ancient Eastern courts to keep chronicles of the events of each king's reign. It was so in Persia. We are told that it was the reading of "the book of records of the chronicles" before Xerxes, which led to the honouring of Mordecai (Esther vi. 1). The custom prevailed also at the court of the northern kingdom of the ten tribes and at that of Judah. We read in 2 Kings xiv. 28: "Now the rest of the acts of Jeroboam, and ALL THAT HE DID, and his might, how he warred, and how he recovered Damascus, and Hamath, which belonged to Judah, for Israel, are they not written in the books of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?" We meet like references to the Judean records, as in 2 Kings xv. 36: "Now the rest of the acts of Jotham, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?" These were, plainly, records which were accessible to the people, and which did not belong to the secret archives of the

palace; for otherwise the reader could hardly have been referred to them in this fashion. They must also have been of a very copious kind, since they contained an account of "all" that a king did from the day of his accession till the day of his death. We might imagine that the statement, "all that he did," was a figure of speech, and that it must not be taken literally. But a reference to an omission made in the chronicles of David's reign is sufficient to make us doubt the wisdom of dismissing the words in that way. In the record in 1 Chronicles xxvii. of David's unhappy census, we read: "Joab the son of Zeruiah began to number, but he finished not, because there fell wrath for it against Israel; neither was the number put in the account of the chronicles of king David" (verse 24). The suppression of the number was, therefore, an extraordinary exception: everything else was recorded, and this also would have been entered but for the wrath which fell on Israel on account of the numbering.

One can understand how abundant that historic literature must have become in the course of ages. And it was not the only provision made for the information of the people. It was impossible, indeed, that in Israel of all lands, where so much was felt to depend upon the proper instruction of the people, these means of information and appeal should not have been utilised. Isaiah seems to have made the history of Uzziah, the great statesman-king of Judah, the subject of a special book: "Now the rest of the acts of Uzziah, first and last, did Isaiah the

prophet, the son of Amoz, write" (2 Chron. xxvi. 22). It will be noted that this is not spoken of as belonging to "the chronicles" of the kings of Judah, so that it appears to have been a separate work. Three prophets had performed a like service for Israel in recording the eventful life of David. "Now the acts of David the king, first and last, behold, they are written in the book of Samuel the seer, and in the book of Nathan the prophet, and in the book of Gad the seer" (1 Chronicles xxix. 29). Here, again, we miss the phrase, "the chronicles of king David," so that these also appear to have been independent narratives. The Book of Jashar, or "of the upright" (Joshua x. 13, &c.), which seems to have been a collection enlarging from age to age—an uninspired but accurate chronicle of instances of Divine intervention and of heroic deeds, and "the book of the wars of the Lord" (Numbers xxi. 14) show that a like literary activity prevailed in a still earlier time.

It is quite clear, then, that the Scriptures existed, from the first, in the midst of a contemporaneous literature, just as the Bible exists still as a Book among books; and it is also certain that the Scriptures were never confounded with the other books of the time. We read of Moses placing the Law by the side of the Ark; but nothing is said of a like treatment of "the book of the wars of the Lord." When the translators of the Septuagint Version set to work some time about 300 B.C., they experienced no difficulty in ascertaining what books they were to translate from Hebrew into Greek. The distinction between

the Scriptures and other Hebrew literature was broad and deep. The Old Testament was translated into Greek for the sole reason that it occupied this unique and sacred position among the Jewish people. When Jesus, the son of Sirah, wrote Ecclesiasticus, within a century afterwards, he had been familiar with this very Jewish Bible from his childhood upwards. It was then to him as sacred and as separate from all other literature as it now is to us. The Psalms, many of which the critics declare did not come into existence till long after Ben-Sirah's time, were in his Bible. And we have already seen that in the time of Josephus, as is equally plain from the New Testament records, there was no trace whatever of doubt as to what was, and what was not, Scripture.

This leaves us face to face with the great problem of the Bible. Those Books of the Old Testament, as they were given, were set apart by themselves. The collection was put together slowly from about 1500 B.C. to 400 B.C.—from Genesis to Malachi. It then stopped. From about 40 to 100 A.D. the Books of the New Testament were given to the Christian Church. Book after Book was put into the hands of the Christian community, each with a Divine authentication. When the Book of Revelation was written and handed over, at the very close of the first century, those gifts ceased. Nothing has been added since. And when we mark what it is that was thus placed in the world's hands, we discover that the Scripture was not only ended: it was also completed. Everyone will admit that the Old Testament is a preparation

for the New. That in itself is marvellous; for who could have made such preparation for a thing which no man saw, or knew, or was able to imagine? But it is also evident that the Old Testament is a steady advance, a skilful progress, towards what is presented in the New. We are briefly informed in Genesis of man's creation and fall: of the fearful judgment which swept away a sinful race; of the lapse of the new humanity which proceeded from the house of Noah; and of the choice of one man who shall be the founder of a new people, and to whom the promise is given that in him and in his seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed.

We have next the story of God's training of that people; of God's long conflict with their idolatry; and of the judgments and the mercy which ended in the final emancipation of the people from that form of sin. The Old Testament ends there; and it ends with an emphatic re-statement of the hope given to Abraham, and which had flamed out with more and more splendour as the ages rolled on. The hope of the Messiah brought brightness to every Jewish heart. Malachi iii. 1, 2 reads: "Behold, I will send My messenger, and he shall prepare the way before Me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, He shall come, saith the Lord of hosts. But who may abide the day of His coming? and who shall stand when He appeareth?" And the Old Testament concludes apparently in full and clear consciousness of how the work which then

stopped was to be resumed in the labours of John the Baptist. These are its last words: "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of that great and dreadful day of the Lord: and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to the fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse" (Malachi iv. 5, 6).

We might dwell upon the unity of purpose which runs throughout the Scripture; upon its prophecies; and upon the Old Testament types which shed such light upon the facts and the doctrines of the New Testament. But enough has been said to demonstrate that the Bible is a planned Book, and that, in opening its pages now, and studying its individual Books, we are dealing with a Divine unity.

THE HISTORICAL BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

THE Old Testament is largely history. The Historical Books form nearly three-fifths of the whole, and the other Books two-fifths. But the history is history written with a prophetic purpose. This was fully recognised by the Jews, who named the Historical Books "the Former Prophets."

These Books, which tell, as we have just seen, one continuous story, have, from the first, been divided into groups in a manner not hitherto noticed. This has been done by the use of the smallest word in the Hebrew language. It consists of only one letter, and that, next to the letter *yod*—the proverbial "*jot*"—the smallest letter in the Hebrew alphabet. This letter-word *vav* answers to our conjunction "and." The simple rendering of it has not been constantly observed in our Authorised Version; and the Revised Version, though much more consistent in this matter, has also failed to give a uniform rendering. The word is occasionally translated "now," and sometimes "then."

Before pointing out the divisions, apparently so carefully marked, an important question presents itself. It is well known that the order of these Books in the Hebrew Bible differs from our own. Both agree, down to 2 Kings, with one exception. The

Book of Ruth, in the Hebrew Bible, is not found immediately after the Book of Judges, as in our Bible, but is removed from "the Former Prophets," and placed in the Hagiographa, between the Song of Songs and the Book of Lamentations. Five more of the Historical Books are treated in a similar fashion. Esther, Ezra, Nehemiah, 1 Chronicles, and 2 Chronicles are put also among the Hagiographa, the Books of Chronicles closing the Hebrew printed Bible.

Though otherwise possibly of small importance, the question as to which of these is the ancient and primal order is not immaterial, in view of the divisions which I have just indicated. Fortunately, we are able to settle this matter by the evidence which Jewish records afford of the changes made in the order of the Books of the Old Testament. The Rabbis seem to have busied themselves with the re-arrangement of them, though the most daring hand left their contents untouched. The earliest Rabbinical arrangement is given in the Babylonian Talmud, but this was, apparently, not regarded as authoritative; for, in the earliest dated Hebrew manuscript at present known (916 A.D.), that order is not observed. There are other marks that the traditional order had been departed from, and that there was difficulty in coming to an agreement as to the order which should replace it. Nine manuscripts, now in the British Museum, place five Books immediately after the Pentateuch, which are now set among the Hagiographa in our printed Hebrew Bibles. And, what is even more significant, these manuscripts vary the order even of

these Books, and present us with the four following arrangements: *

1.	2.	3.	4.
Song of Songs.	Esther.	Ruth.	Ruth.
Ruth.	Song of Songs.	Song of Songs.	Song of Songs.
Lamentations.	Ruth.	Ecclesiastes.	Lamentations.
Ecclesiastes.	Lamentations.	Lamentations.	Ecclesiastes.
Esther.	Ecclesiastes.	Esther.	Esther.

The variations in the order of the Hagiographa are much more numerous. Ginsburg gives eight arrangements as the result of his inspection of the Talmud, a number of leading MSS., and five early printed editions. In five of these the Books of Chronicles are placed last, and in three of them they head the list. That fact is eloquent.

In the days of Josephus the Historical Books were all in the division of the Prophets. † Only *four* Books which, it will be remembered, he describes as "containing hymns to God and rules of life for men," are placed in a third division. Evidently these were the Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Songs. It is possible, too, that this was a mere matter of classification, and not a description of sections in the canonical order of the Books. What we have now to remark, however, is that in the time of Josephus there was no wrenching away of any of the Historical Books so that they might be placed in some later section. The Historical Books were massed to-

* See Ginsburg, *Introduction to the Hebrew Bible*, pp. 1-8. † See page 128.

gether. When we note that the order in our English Bible is the order of the Septuagint, which represents the Hebrew text as it existed in the third century B.C., we may consider that this question is set at rest, and that the arrangement of the Books, to which we have been accustomed, is the arrangement of the original Scriptures.

Let us now recall the fact that very many of these Books are prefaced by the conjunction *vĕ*, "and." This indicates that the Books which thus begin *are continuations of earlier Books.* They are added on to something which has gone before. If we turn to Genesis, we find no "and" at the commencement of it. Its opening words are: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." But Exodus commences thus: "Now these are the names of the children of Israel;" literally, "And these are the names," etc. Leviticus opens with: "And the Lord called unto Moses;" and Numbers: "And the Lord spake unto Moses." These four Books are, consequently, connected together, and form the first division of the Historical Books.

It may astonish the reader to discover that Deuteronomy, which is supposed to be the completion of the four former Books, is in reality dissociated from them, and made the beginning of a new series. When we read its opening words we find no "and." The Book commences: "These be the words which Moses spake unto all Israel." It is, consequently, not a supplement to what has gone before. It forms a new departure. It looks onward, not backward. Joshua comes next, and

shows the usual sign of addition. It opens: "Now after the death of Moses," literally, "AND it happened after the death of Moses," &c. Every subsequent Book, till we reach 2 Kings, commences similarly. Judges: "Now [AND] after the death of Joshua"; Ruth: "Now [AND] it came to pass in the days when the Judges ruled"; 1 Samuel: "Now [AND] there was a certain man"; 2 Samuel: "Now [AND] it came to pass after the death of Saul"; 1 Kings: "Now [AND] king David was old and stricken in years"; 2 Kings: "Then [AND] Moab rebelled against Israel after the death of Ahab." And there the additions cease. Each of the foregoing Books is annexed to Deuteronomy, and the whole form with it the second division of the Historical Books.

1 Chronicles lacks the prefix which is so common a feature of the Historical Books. It commences with the words: "Adam, Sheth, Enosh," and proceeds to give us the genealogies of the nations, and next, of the tribes and families of Israel. The Book, being thus without "and," is not added on to anything which has preceded, and forms the first of a new series. 2 Chronicles i. 1, however, reads: "AND Solomon, the son of David, was strengthened in his kingdom." This is, consequently, a sequel to the Book which goes before. Ezra has also to be added, seeing that its opening words are: "Now [AND] in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia," etc. And here this third series stops: for the Book of Nehemiah wants the usual sign of addition, and commences "The words of Nehemiah the son of Hachiliah.'

This, like the severance of Deuteronomy from the other four Books of Moses, is one of the surprises of the arrangement. The Jewish people and the Christian Church have regarded the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah as so closely connected together that they have been thought of as virtually one. The only remaining Historical Book is Esther, and it is appended to Nehemiah. Its first words are: "Now [AND] it came to pass in the days of Ahasuerus," etc.

Is there any inherent fitness in this arrangement? Does the separation of the Books into these four groups enable us to grasp more easily the history of Israel? A brief inspection of the groups will suggest a somewhat remarkable reply to these questions. Genesis to Numbers gives us the history of Israel *outside the land* promised to them for an inheritance. Deuteronomy to 2 Kings deals with Israel *inside the land*. This fully confirms what has been felt all along, and is, indeed, embalmed in the name "Deuteronomy" ("a second Law"): It rehearses the history of Israel, and restates the Law, in view of the approaching possession of Canaan. It is the Divine commencement, therefore, of the after history. 1 Chronicles to Ezra describes *Israel's return to the land*, 1st and 2nd Chronicles being, in this case, the Deuteronomy of the Return. They rehearse the history of Israel in view of the re-possession of the inheritance, while Ezra tells of the actual occupation of the recovered country. This also accounts fully for the special characteristics of the Chronicles. Wellhausen has exclaimed against what he calls their "pragmatism,"

that is, their "meddlesome," "officious" inculcation of the lessons of the history which they recount. With them it is history told with a distinct, deeply earnest, and ever-remembered, purpose. And what else could have been the character of "the Deuteronomy" of the new era? That very "pragmatism" discloses the reason for the existence of these gifts of Divine Inspiration, and their fitness for their peculiar service.

The last group, Nehemiah-Esther, deals with what has been so notable a feature of Israel from that time to the present hour—the *diaspora*, the Dispersion. There were multitudes of Jews who did not go back, and who, with their descendants, remained scattered among the nations. These Books give us a two-fold picture of them. In Nehemiah we see one whose heart was with the men of the Return. He is so filled with concern for their condition, and for Jerusalem, that he must go up for a time at least and strengthen the hands of his brethren. The Nehemiahs have thus been in all generations extensions of the Jewish brotherhood. But there was another and huge section of the Dispersion, which cared little for these things. The condition of the Holy City and of those, who were toiling amid scorn and hardship to replant God's people in the land of their inhabitance, was no matter of vital concern to them. These are represented in Esther, Mordecai, and the great body of the dispersed Israelites then scattered over the Persian Empire. They were Jews in name, and probably also in customs, though the latter

seem to have been easily dispensed with. Mordecai bears a heathen name, and Esther would not have been able to conceal her nationality, if she had been a devout Jewess. This, as I have elsewhere pointed out, * explains a feature of the Book which has been a long-standing problem for Bible students. God's name is not once mentioned in it. Neither are we once told that the Jews prayed to God in their dire distress, or praised God when deliverance came to them, though it is quite improbable that they had not done so. But these Jews had despised the work which had been Divinely assigned to them. They had abandoned the great position which God had given to the nation of co-operating with Him in the world's salvation. Therefore, though in His Providence He will chastise and deliver them, God will not have their names mentioned with His. Their story and His shall not be bound up together.†

If this arrangement of the Historical Books commends itself; if it sheds new and important light upon their mission; if it reveals the necessity for each part, and the perfect completeness of the whole; what lesson underlies it all? The arrangement is effected, as we have seen, by the silent use of the smallest word of the Hebrew speech, and what is well-nigh also its smallest letter. It is often placed as the first word of a Book. It is sometimes withheld. But when the work is finished, we have this light shed upon the structure of the larger part of the Old Testament

* *The Inspiration and Accuracy of the Holy Scriptures.*

† Compare Jeremiah xliv. 26-28 and Hosea iv. 6.

Scripture, and upon the special purpose of each of its Books. The doctrine of verbal Inspiration—that is, the doctrine which teaches that Inspiration extends to the very words of the original Scriptures—is supposed by many to have been finally discredited. But what shall we say of this? Who placed and withheld that letter *vav* with watchfulness which never slumbered for the long period of eleven centuries, which separated the first Books of the series from the last? We may dislike doctrines; but we must not refuse to consider facts.

GENESIS TO NUMBERS.

ISRAEL OUTSIDE THE LAND.

CHAPTER I.

The Plan of Genesis.

IT might seem as if it were necessary to deal with the higher criticism, especially in view of its supposed case against the integrity of Genesis, before commencing the exposition of the Book. A few words will be said upon the critical theories in a later chapter; but the exposition will really be the most effective reply. Gunkel, in his recently-issued second edition of his book on Genesis,* closes his introduction with a singular, but eloquent, table. He names it "The Succession of the Fragments of Genesis in the Commentary." From this table we learn that the critical fiat has gone forth that Genesis is no longer to commence with the familiar words: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." These words will not be reached till the reader has had a number of other fragments served up to him, the last of which consists of the first nine verses of chap. xi. These form the twenty-fourth fragment; and then comes the ancient commencement of the Book as fragment twenty-five! That is the latest result reached by the higher criticism in regard to those opening chapters of the Bible. It is the reconstruction forced

* *Handkommentar zum Alten Testament*, Göttingen, 1902.

upon the critics as the logical outcome of the principles which they have adopted. Now, if it is shown that Genesis is not a collection of fragments, but that it is, on the contrary, one of the most perfect unities in all literature, then it will be proved that the higher criticism is a gigantic blunder, and that its fundamental principles are delusions.

To this study, then, we now proceed, in the full assurance that this long-continued assault upon the Christian faith will find here its Waterloo. Kuenen confessed long ago that the critic has nothing more before him than the general public have. He has no documents to consult, other than this Bible which is before us all. If, by the application of their principles to this, they discover that it is a mere bundle of fragments; and if we, on studying the same Book, find it a perfect and glorious unity, we shall form our own judgment of the reliability of critical theories. We shall also examine the arguments which the critics have based upon certain passages, the alleged double narratives, &c., as they come before us in the course of our exposition. The reader will thus be able to refer to these replies by consulting the treatment of the passages in question in our running commentary.

Has Genesis a plan? That the Book is most methodically arranged is now becoming clear, even to critical eyes. It is divided into eleven great natural chapters. The Introduction ends with the *third* verse of chapter ii. But the critics, in order to manufacture *two* accounts of the Creation, carry the

conclusion of this first division to the opening words of the fourth verse of chapter ii.: "These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created." Here they blunder at the outset. The Hebrew word *Tholedōth*, translated "generations," comes from the word *yalad*, "to bring forth," and means "things brought forth." That this is the meaning of the word is clear from its use in Genesis. "The generations of the sons of Noah" (x. 1), for instance, are not the story of *the origin* of these men. The section, of which it is the heading, contains not a single word about their ancestry. *It is the story of their descendants:* it is simply and purely the record of the families *which sprang from them*, and of one great event in which these families all participated, and which led to their being scattered over all the earth. "The generations of Shem" (xi. 10) likewise preserve absolute silence with regard to Shem's *origin*. They give an account of *the descendants* of Shem. So in the next section (xi. 27) we read: "These are the generations of Terah: Terah begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran; and Haran begat Lot," &c. It is the story of Terah's descendants.

Not observing this, the critics have made "the generations of the heavens and of the earth" (ii. 4) refer to *the origin* of the material universe—thus forcing upon the word *Tholedōth* a sense which the Scripture use of it repudiates. It refers invariably to what comes after, never to what goes before: not to what has produced, but to that which has been produced; never to ancestry, but always to posterity. In

wrenching away these words, therefore, from their connection, and making them conclude the first section instead of introduce the second, the critics have not only done violence to the Scripture which they undertake to explain; they have also misunderstood the Hebrew which they profess to teach.

The second division of the Book commences, then, with the words (ii. 4, 5): "These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens, and every plant," &c. What the phrase means here become plain on a moment's reflection. The creation of the heavens and of the earth is not the end of the story which Genesis has to tell. It is merely its beginning. This material universe is to be the theatre and the stage of a mighty drama, in which God, and man, and the entire creation, have their part. In other words, the heavens and the earth have their *Tholedōth*—scenes and events to which their creation is the prelude. They introduce a fresh chapter in the history. That chapter is the commencement of the story of man; for the fate of the material universe is now bound up with his. We have, consequently, fresh details concerning the first man and woman, and of the creation which surrounds them; we are told of the home which God prepared for them; of His intercourse with them there; of the command which He lays upon them; of their disobedience and fall; of the loss of Paradise; and of the first dark fruit of sin in the murder of Abel. We have, then, the story of the murderer and

of his posterity. The third section of the Book opens with the words: "This is the book of the generations of Adam" (v. 1). It follows the posterity of Adam in the line of Seth. This section extends to vi. 8. In vi. 9 we meet again the now familiar phrase, "The generations of;" and this is henceforth the dividing-line of the great natural chapters of the Book, and that by which it ought to have been divided from the first, had its plan been perceived. The following table shows these sections at a glance:

(1) The Beginning (i. 1—ii. 3).
The Generations of the heavens and the earth (ii. 4—iv. 26).
The Book of the Generations of Adam (v. 1—vi. 8).
The Generations of Noah (vi. 9—ix. 29).
,, ,, ,, the sons of Noah (x. 1—xi. 9).
,, ,, ,, Shem (xi. 10—26).
,, ,, ,, Terah (xi. 27—xxv. 11).
,, ,, ,, Ishmael (xxv. 12—18).
,, ,, ,, Isaac (xxv. 19—xxxv. 29).
,, ,, ,, Esau (xxxvi. 1—xxxvii. 1).
,, ,, ,, Jacob (xxxvii. 2—l. 26).

It will be plain from the above Table that the writer has a perfectly distinct and consistent method and plan. He sets out with the creation of all things, and he concludes by showing us the chosen people, with which the rest of the Old Testament is to be concerned, resting in Egypt. He advances steadily, step by step, towards this goal, neglecting nothing, yet keeping the main purpose of the Book constantly in view. These eleven opening chapters of Genesis are

stages in what is plainly a planned journey, each of them bringing us nearer to the end. Is there any composition, either in the Bible or outside of it, which presents more conclusive proof that it is the work of one hand, the outcome of one Mind? And, nevertheless, this is the Book which Gunkel has broken up into no fewer than 170 fragments! He has been forced to do this by the principles laid down by his predecessors and accepted by himself. Do we require anything further to convince us that Gunkel has run the higher criticism to its death, and that, in these 170 fragments, contrasted with the manifest unity of Genesis, he has disclosed the utter absurdity of critical methods?

CHAPTER II.

The Unity of Genesis.

THE method pursued in the composition of Genesis is of a most peculiar kind. It is found in no other Book of the Bible, and in no other work which I am aware of in any literature. The Book is a series of genealogies; and yet these are so arranged as to form a continuous and deeply-interesting history —a history which has ever appealed broadly to the mind and heart of humanity. The young, the mature, and the aged, have perused its pages with perennial interest and profit.

This is the more astonishing, seeing that the genealogical plan is rigorously adhered to. Each genealogy is completed before the next begins. The break in the

Creation-History, caused by the unhappy division into chapters, has concealed the completeness of the first section. The completion of chapter i. has been cut away, and made into the first three verses of chapter ii. We read there: "Thus the heavens and he earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had made; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it He had rested from all His work which God created and made" (iii. 1-3). The account of God's creative work is here carried to its termination; and the section is thus completed before the next is begun. The second section, entitled "The Generations of the heavens and of the earth," finishes with one of those suggestive hints so characteristic of Scripture. It has been a tragic story. God's work, which He declared to be "very good," has brought forth awful fruit. We see nothing but Divine disappointment and man's ruin; and the question rises to the lips: "Wherefore hast Thou made all men in vain?" Like an answer to that question come the last words of this second division of the Book. They are these: "Then began men to call upon the name of the Lord" (iv. 26). There has been another birth in Adam's home. To Eve, the new gift has brought with it consolation and hope. It was a break in the black cloud which had fallen upon her and her house. She "called his name Seth: For God, said she, hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel, whom

Cain slew" (iv. 25). The word was prophetic. The darkness *was* breaking. The fruit of the creation of the heavens and of the earth is not to be utter disappointment. This is, indeed, a worthy substitute for Abel whom Cain slew; and, for that one seeker after God whose blood was poured out upon the earth, there now sprang up many; "then began men to call upon the name of the Lord."

The same feature characterises all the divisions. I take two more sections, one brief, the other long, but both showing the same completeness. "The generations of Ishmael" (xxv. 12) concludes with the death of Ishmael and the settlement of his descendants. "And they dwelt from Havilah unto Shur, that is before Egypt, as thou goest toward Assyria: and he died in the presence of all his brethren" (verse 18). That section, xxv. 12-18, it will be noticed, short though it be, is so complete that it might have stood alone. The same thing is true of "the generations of Jacob," one of the very longest natural chapters in the Book. For a reason, which we shall inquire into immediately, Joseph's name is bound up with Jacob's at the outset, so that this part is really the story of the Patriarch's well-loved son. It begins (xxxvii. 2): "These are the generations of Jacob. Joseph, being seventeen years old, was feeding the flock with his brethren," &c.; and it ends with these words: "So Joseph died, being an hundred and ten years old: and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt" (l. 26). It might have been a question with a reader of the Scripture, why the

Book of Genesis should have closed with these words. There is nothing whatever to show that it is a natural ending of the Book, until we turn back to the beginning of the closing section. There we find the intimation that we are to have, in this last natural chapter of Genesis, the story mainly of this one son; and, consequently, the section having to be completed and the story finished, Joseph's death required to be recorded.

Nothing can be more certain, then, than that in the Book of Genesis we have one method, clearly conceived and consistently followed from the commencement to the close, from the first word to the last. How many books can we cite which will display so clear and conclusive a proof of unity of authorship? It might possibly be suggested that this is just one of those things which an interpolator would be sure to mark, and would find it easy to copy. But, then, that interpolator would have to be credited with bigger brains than have been possessed by a vast army of Jewish rabbis and of Christian expositors and critics. For this division into sections, though, like the law of gravitation, apparently, when it has once been noted, among the most obvious of all things, has attracted attention only in recent times; and is, nevertheless, as we have just seen, woven into the very fabric of the Book.

But the unity goes deeper than even this arrangement. Genesis is history told with a purpose. We can generally tell what the intention of a book is by noticing what it is to which most space is given.

More than three-fourths of Genesis is devoted to the story of three men—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and less than one-fourth to the history of the creation of the material universe, the story of primeval humanity, of the Flood, and of the many families and peoples touched upon in the Book. The emphasis, then, clearly rests upon those three men. But why should their career be detailed at such length that they become the heroes of the narrative? What is it that specially marks them off from all others? The Book itself provides the answer. To Abraham the promise is given: "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed" (xxii. 18). Before the birth of Isaac, God had said: "I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him" (xvii. 19). To Jacob the same promise was made: "In thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed" (xxviii. 14). These men are the founders of the people whose mission it is to become the channel of salvation to the whole earth.

That this view is not foisted upon the Book, but is a well-grounded inference from its contents, is amply confirmed by other characteristics. There is a distinct progress in the genealogies. We are led onward in a certain direction by *a series of selections*. In "the book of the generations of Adam" we read only of Seth and his descendants. Every other son of Adam is set aside. When we ask why this is done, the reply at once presents itself that Noah was Seth's descendant. Every other branch of the human family perished in the Deluge but that of Seth, which was continued

in Noah and his sons. Seth is chosen, therefore, because he is the one son of Adam whose line is to be perpetuated; for we, and the men of our time, are all Sethites. Is it not marvellous to find this course adopted so quietly, without one word of explanation, and yet taken so decidedly, and with such a depth of intention? Is it the way of "saga," of legend, and of folklore (as the critics tell us we must now believe Genesis to be) to treat matters with such a touch of quiet and perfect mastery; with such a far, all-observant, gaze into futurity?

We are only at the beginning, however, of these marvels. The next selection, after that of Noah, is Shem (xi. 10). Here a family of nations is chosen whose characteristics are still deeply marked, and which bears the name to-day of their common father. Was there any reason for thus fixing our attention upon the Semitic peoples, and leading us into the midst of them? The Book itself explains why this course is taken. We recall Noah's blessing and the words: "Blessed be the Lord God of Shem" (ix. 26). Jehovah-Elohim is to be revealed to the Semite as to no other branch of the human race. He is to be known as "the Lord-God of Shem." Therefore is it, then, that we are led hither. The next selection is that of Terah (xi.27). Every other branch of the great Semitic family is left to pursue its way, and this one house is singled out. We have already seen why this is done. It is the home of Abraham: and the consciousness of this destiny fills the man's soul and consecrates him. He walks with God: he is "the friend of God."

Then Ishmael is set aside, and Isaac is taken. In Isaac's household a similar selection is made. Esau is set aside: Jacob is chosen; and the last fourteen chapters of the Book—between one-fourth and one-third of the entire contents of Genesis—are devoted to "the generations of Jacob."

Now, let us mark whither this line leads. Lay it across those selected points—Shem, Terah (including Abraham), Isaac, Jacob. Prolong it down the ages, and it touches at last upon Bethlehem and Calvary! Step by step Genesis leads us on unhesitatingly, and in one direct line, till we are brought to the house of Israel. This is done with the reiterated assurance that in this chosen people there will at last be found healing for the nations. Has the promise been fulfilled? Has blessing for all nations, such as no other family of mankind has provided, been met with there? If so, then we are face to face with miracle. For how could this Genesis-writer have conceived the idea, and have been so fully assured that it would be realised, that he leads us straight on to this people as the world's hope? But whatever may be thought as to that, one thing is clear. The unity of Genesis lies deeper than its mere genealogical plan. There is a glow throughout of one hope, and a direction chosen and persistently kept to, which proclaim the pen of one writer. A collection of fragments could never have assumed this perfect shape, even with the assistance of the most ingenious editors.

CHAPTER III.

The Divine Stamp upon Genesis.

A NOTICEABLE feature in Genesis, as we have already hinted, is its reticence. There is no preaching nor moralising. The writer never pauses to point out a lesson, though dealing with the origin of sin, the judgment of the Flood, and with many a tempting theme besides. This is the more remarkable that there is a pervading suggestiveness. The lessons are there; but, like fruit hidden by leaves, they have to be looked for. For example, when we read of Abram and his company that "they went forth (from Haran) to go into the land of Canaan: and into the land of Canaan they came," we are apt to imagine that these last words are a repetition due to the simplicity which marked the literary style of those ancient times. If they set out to go to the land of Canaan, of course, we say, they must have come to the land of Canaan. But when we read the context carefully, we conclude that our conception of the case is due to modern, rather than to ancient, simplicity. We are told, just a few verses before, that Abram had once before "set out to go to the land of Canaan," but that into the land of Canaan he and his company had not come. They stopped midway at Haran, where the old idolatry surrounded them, out of which God had called His servant. Is it difficult to see

there the danger of a half-obedience? Abraham's second call is as necessary and imperative as the first. Haran was not Canaan, though it lay upon the way to Canaan. We cannot make compromises with God. It is only to a full surrender that the inheritance will be given.

There is a similar suggestiveness in the order observed in these genealogies. *The rejected line is always named first.* Thus Cain's posterity are placed before the posterity of Seth; "the generations of Ishmael" before "the generations of Isaac;" "the generations of Esau" before "the generations of Jacob," &c. There is no explanation given as to why this is done. We only note that the law is never once departed from. When we come to the last instance —"the generations of Jacob"—the suggestion, however, is more apparent; so apparent, indeed, that it seems almost impossible that it should be overlooked. We are told (chapter xxxvi.) how Esau's children became princes. The Dukes are enumerated, evidently great territorial magnates. They elected kings, united in this way their forces, and became formidable among the nationalities of Canaan. The words which complete the section are: "These be the Dukes of Edom, according to their habitations in the land of their possession: he is Esau the father of the Edomites. And Jacob dwelt in the land wherein his father was a stranger, in the land o Canaan" (xxxvi. 43—xxxvii. 1). Esau and his children entered at once upon their possession. Greatness came early, and it came abundantly. Jacob, on the

other hand, had to wait. Even in Canaan, the very land that is his by promise, he is merely a tolerated stranger. *The chosen have to wait.* That is the lesson which is written upon all these genealogies, and which thus challenges our attention just as we are about to enter upon the last of them. "The Lord is good unto all." If Esau despises the birthright, God will give him that which he will receive willingly and gladly. He will give it to him fully, and He will give it to him early. They who are reserved for the better portion have to tarry. There is discipline in that which they must not miss; for without it, they shall not possess worthily. In addition to the gift, they are to have a still better thing. They are to know, and to love, the Giver.

I do not know of any book outside the Bible wherein lessons, so plainly intended, are left in this way to be discovered by the student. To teach thus silently, to prepare joy for the discoverer so calmly and yet so lovingly, is not man's way: but it is often God's way. It is the Divine plan for the education of humanity. The student of nature is, by this very method, filled with the truest, purest, delight, and invested with greatness among his fellows. Is it fanciful, then, to trace in Genesis the same method? Is it rash to say that the book of nature and the Bible have been arranged upon the same plan, and by the same Hand?

I have already spoken of the goal of the Book. It follows a special line down through the whole of the primeval history. That line passes on through one

ice after another till the selections close
and his family. In the former part of the
promise is given that the seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent. The reader will judge it worthy of note that it is *the woman's* offspring, and not the man's, of which this destiny is predicted. It may impress some, at least, to find here an intimation already given of the miraculous conception of the Deliverer of humanity. This promise is repeated, and (as we have just noticed) thrice secured by distinct Divine covenant to these men—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Then the promise passes to the family of Jacob. The world's hope rests with this people of Israel—the smallest of the nations. Who, even in the fourth century B.C., could have conceived it possible that a Jew should arise who should rally round Him the nations, undo the serpent's work, and bless men with the restored fellowship of God?

That there is no way of explaining this feature, apart from the Divine origin of this marvellously-planned Book, I have indicated already in the preceding chapter. The impossibility of excluding this explanation will become more apparent as we proceed with the exposition—especially of the first chapter. Meanwhile, I limit myself to minor, but, nevertheless, significant, indications of the Divine hand. If the reader will examine the genealogies, he will find that *the chronology of Genesis is confined to the selected line.* In the account of the posterity of Cain, the genealogy runs as follows: "And unto Enoch was born Irad:

and Irad begat Mehujael: and Mehujael begat Methusael: and Methusael begat Lamech" (ver. 18). Here not a single year is mentioned. There is no reckoning whatever. But when we proceed to the next chapter (which records the posterity of Seth) we meet the most careful chronology to be found in any literature: "And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat . . . Seth. And the days of Adam after he had begotten Seth were eight hundred years. . . And all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years: and he died. And Seth lived an hundred and five years, and begat Enos. And Seth lived after he begat Enos eight hundred and seven years. . . And all the days of Seth were nine hundred and twelve years" (verses 3-8).

There could not be a more careful reckoning than that. It is, so to speak, a system of double entry. We are told first the age of the father at the birth of the son who is named. Then we learn how long he lived after that son's birth. The matter might have been left there; for we could easily have told the age of the patriarch at death by adding together these two sums. But lest any error should be made in the transmission of the figures, the sum of the two numbers is given us by the Scripture. In chapter x. the posterity of Japheth, Ham, and Shem are named without the mention of a single number. It might be concluded, however, that the law does not hold here, seeing that Shem's line is treated in the same fashion. But it will be observed that here we have *all* Shem's descendants, and not merely the selected

line. When we do come to the chosen line, the same careful enumeration appears again (though with a difference): "These are the generations of Shem: Shem was an hundred years old, and begat Arphaxad two years after the Flood: and Shem lived after he begat Arphaxad five hundred years. . And Arphaxad lived five and thirty years, and begat Salah: and Arphaxad lived after he begat Salah four hundred and three years" (xi. 10-13). In the subsequent selections we still find the reckoning given. It is confined to the history of the chosen seed, though it has to be searched for. We meet it again in Exodus, where we are told the exact duration of the sojourning of the Israelites; and along the story of Israel we pick up the chronological thread, which has enabled scholars to make a beginning, for example, with the chronology of Egypt.

What does it mean? Is it not that the story of those alone, who bring salvation to this waiting earth, is history in the sight of God? Is it not an indication that this alone will yet be reckoned genuine history even by men? What is the worth of the Chronicles of Egypt, or of Babylonia, or of Assyria, compared with the record of God's dealings with the poor, long-oppressed, and still-despised Jew? It is another indication that Genesis is pervaded by a consciousness of the destiny of Israel—a consciousness of a destiny which is not yet exhausted. The sojourning of the Jew is the measure of God's grace for the Gentiles; and the ending of that long travail will strike the hour of the earth's deliverance. This last

statement may not carry with it the assent of all; but the reckoning of the years in connection with the selected lines, and with them only, must surely be accepted as emphasising the anticipation of blessing from the race towards which the history leads us. The marking of the lapse of time here alone clearly tells us that. Expectation sits here looking onward, open-eyed, and marking how much of the allotted span is passed.

We have already noted the fact that Joseph is closely associated with Jacob in the last section of the Book. "These are the generations of Jacob," we read in xxxvii. 2:

> "Joseph, being seventeen years old, was feeding the flock with his brethren; and the lad was with the sons of Bilhah, and with the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives: and Joseph brought unto his father their evil report. Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age: and he made him a coat of many colours," &c.

The section proceeds as it begins. After a chapter concerning Judah (xxxviii.), the story of Joseph is resumed, and he becomes the hero of this part of the sacred history, the Book ending (as we have seen) with his death and his dying charge to the children of Israel.

When we ask why Joseph should be associated in this way with Jacob, a reply seems hard to find. It has been urged as a likely explanation, that Joseph was the son of Rachel, the beloved wife of Jacob. But this appears to be scarcely sufficient, for Benjamin,

youngest child of all, was also Rachel's son. We are apparently unable also to fall back upon what we have found to be the pervading purpose, which, like a golden thread, links all the parts of the Book together. We cannot say that Joseph is in the direct line from which the Messiah is to spring; for the favoured tribe was that of Judah, and not Manasseh nor Ephraim, which sprang from Joseph. And yet this is, after all, the explanation. Joseph is a type of Jesus; and he is the sole type of the Messiah supplied by these twelve Patriarchs. Not one of those Old Testament types of Christ repeats the picture given in another. Each tells the story of Him who was to come from its own point of view. Note (1) the relationship between this father and son. They are bound together with the bands of deep and strong affection. "Israel loved Joseph more than all his children," and that love is returned by Joseph with an equal intensity. Is it fanciful to see in this a shadowing of the love which binds God and Christ together?

If this should seem to be due to fancy, a further study of the type may dispel that notion. We observe (2) that Joseph has intimations of coming greatness. We are immediately told of his two dreams. These dreams did not come at his bidding. They were prophecies of the mighty destiny reserved for this well-loved son; and they were no doubt intended as Divine provision for heart and mind in the bitter trials which were to follow. Here, again, in the glory reserved for this member of Israel's

family, we see something of Him whom His brethren will yet hail as Lord of all. But (3) what followed from this special favour, and from these intimations of future greatness? Bitter hatred! "When his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him" (verse 4). When the dreams were told them, "his brethren said to him, Shalt thou indeed reign over us? or shalt thou have dominion over us? And they hated him yet the more for his dreams, and for his words" (verse 8).

It will be admitted that we have here what is, at least, a marvellous illustration of our Lord's position among His brethren. It was the very closeness of the bond which bound God and Him together that awoke the envy and hostility of the priests and the rulers, the Pharisees and the Scribes. Jesus loved the Father, and the Father loved and honoured Jesus. The people recognised instinctively the position given to the Son. They felt that He spoke with authority and not as the Scribes. The new Teacher was ousting the religious leaders from their place in the confidence of the people. And the old harvest of hate sprang up again in Israel. The old challenge rang out once more: "Shalt thou indeed reign over us? or shalt thou have dominion over us?" From hate there comes (4) murder: "And when they saw him afar off, even before he came near unto them, they conspired to slay him" (verse 18). It was the type of many a Jewish council in those days when the rulers "sought to slay" Jesus (John v. 16-18),

though they imposed upon themselves and others by cloaking their enmity in the disguise of indignant virtue.

The parallel still goes on. (5) Joseph was brought up from the pit which was intended to be his sepulchre; and Jesus is raised from the dead. And now (6) Joseph's story is henceforth bound up with the story of a foreign people. He goes down into Egypt, and there the intimations of coming greatness find their first fulfilment. We trace here the continuation of our Lord's story. He is preached and believed on among the Gentiles. *His* story is henceforth bound up with that of Gentile peoples—the Christian nations. Egypt (7) honours this man, rejected and cast out by his brethren, and reaps a rich harvest of blessing. Joseph is put in the place of supreme power. The administration of Egypt is committed to him, with the result that the people have abounding prosperity, and bread to eat even in days of famine; while the king's power is placed upon a broader and firmer basis. That story has been repeated in many a land since then. Jesus has never been the trusted Counsellor and Lord of any nation where the like, and also greater, blessings have not become the inheritance of both sovereign and people.

Two other, and equally striking, traits will complete the picture. Joseph (8) enters into an abiding alliance with the people which has put its trust in him. His life is, in a manner, identified with theirs. He marries an Egyptian; "and Pharaoh . . . gave him to wife Asenath the daughter of Potipherah

priest of On" (xli. 45). And the Lord has not disdained the peoples who have put their trust in Him. He has made an eternal covenant with them. He has bound up his life with theirs, taking to Him a bride out of all nations, and kindreds, and peoples, and tongues. But (9) it was Joseph's destiny to rule among the very brethren who had cast him out. This token of God's favour, though by no means the least, came last. The famine is also in the land of Canaan. The family of Israel have wealth, but they have not bread. Driven by need, and attracted by Egypt's fulness, they come down to the Gentiles' Deliverer that they and their little ones may live and not die. And so the prophecies, which have been so marvellously fulfilled in the blessings which the nations have found in Christ, tell us more. The days are coming, say they, when the word, which declared of old that Jesus should be set as King upon God's holy hill of Zion, shall be fulfilled. The Jew, driven by bitter need, will seek the Gentiles' Saviour; and then they will discover their long-lost brother, their Joseph. This Book of Genesis, as we have seen, points from the first to Christ. As we follow the line of these Divine selections, we march onward, like the magi of old, towards "the Star of Bethlehem." Does it not add to our astonishment to note here, that the Book, in this last section, ends with a typical Saviour, and with a typical salvation, first for the Gentile, and then for the Jew?

We meet with a statement in the beginning of chapter v. which the critics seem not to have utilised.

With a little of their customary audacity, and a few unscrupulous changes, it might have been represented as a *third* account of the creation. We read: "In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him; male and female created He them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created" (verses 1, 2). But, as we read on, we discover that this is merely part of a significant contrast. The next word, "and," shows that the statement about to be made is closely connected with that which has gone before: "And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in his own likeness, after his image; and called his name Seth" (verse 3).

Seth, we know, was born (iv. 25) after the expulsion from paradise, and even after sin had borne its terrible fruit in the murder of Abel. When we are told, therefore, that, while the first parents of our race were created in God's image, after God's likeness, Seth was begotten in the image and after the likeness of Adam, the words mean that Seth was formed in the likeness and the image of a fallen being. He inherited a sinful nature. This concerns us closely; for all of us are Sethites. Every other branch of the human race perished, as we have already noted, in the Flood. The Sethite family of Noah alone escaped, and from them all men since born are descended. Seth handed on to Noah, and through him to us, the nature which he himself had received, and that a nature begotten in the likeness and after the image of a ruined man. What, then, does the contrast,

which, as usual in Genesis, is merely stated and not commented upon, mean? The two origins are placed side by side. With what intention are they thus presented? Is it too much to conclude that this story of God's preparation for the earth's salvation here indicates why this salvation requires to be provided? In other words, that this early chapter of Genesis teaches the doctrine of universal depravity?

I might again press the question as to Whose touch this is; but this is only part of the striking display of the combined fulness, earnest purpose, and marvellous reticence which confront us here. The section commences: "This is the book of the generations of Adam." As we have seen, the phrase, "the generations of," is repeated again and again. But we shall search Genesis in vain for any repetition of these words: "THE BOOK of the generations of." We do not find it again in the whole of the Old Testament. It is repeated once only in the entire Scripture. The opening words of the New Testament are these: "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham" (Matthew i. 1). This fact, so noticeable in itself, acquires immense significance when we remember other Scripture statements. In "the Book of the generations of Adam" all our names are written. They are inscribed there by right of our common descent. But this enrolment is a list of fallen beings, of sinful men. We are inheritors of a polluted nature which none of us has been able to purify. To answer, therefore, to that roll-call is to be marshalled for condemnation.

But the Scripture speaks of another Book in which names may be, and are, inscribed. There are many, we read in Revelation xiii., who will be drawn away in the final apostacy and revolt against God; but they are those "whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. If any man have ears to hear let him hear" (verses 8, 9). In chapter xx. we are told of "the great white throne," and the final judgment: "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life. . . . And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire" (verses 12-15). In xxi. 27, we read concerning the new City, the eternal home of the redeemed: "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life." There is a last reference to this Book in the closing words of Scripture, which have a special message for the present hour: "And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book" (xxii. 19).

There is but one Book for the saved. It is the Book of the Lamb—the one Divinely appointed and accepted sacrifice for sin, the Book, therefore, of life. Here our view ceases to be limited to Genesis. We are compelled to note the unity of Scripture. Shall

we say that it is quite by accident that these phrases thus answer to each other—"The Book of the generations of Adam"—"The Book of the generation of Jesus Christ," "the Lamb's Book of Life?" Is there no arranging hand visible in thus confining the one—the Book of condemnation—to the Law, and in making the other—the Book of salvation—stand in the forefront, and amid the last solemn words, of the Gospel? And whose arranging hand can this be, if not the Hand of God?

CHAPTER IV.

The Higher Criticism and the New Testament in their Attitude toward Genesis.

IT will be necessary to refer here to the critical theories of the origin of Genesis; but a few words will suffice. For one thing, it would be well nigh as profitable to enter upon a study of the latest Paris fashions. Of these we have experience enough to know that this book would hardly be in the market before "the latest" fashions would have given way to others still more recent. The much-spoken-of agreement of the critics is a myth, and their "ascertained results" require to be summed up in a very tender fashion. When the analysis of the Pentateuch began, the public was told that Genesis was clearly the outcome of a two-fold authorship. There was one writer who only knew one name for God—the Hebrew

Elohim; and there was another writer who, strangely enough, was afflicted with an equally limited vocabulary. The term he used was *Jehovah* (both these names will be explained in our brief commentary). The critics were quite certain that E (the *Elohist,* who used the word *Elohim)* was the older writer, and J (the *Jehovist,* who used the name Jehovah) was the later writer. There was not, perhaps, *very* much difference between their dates; but still, that was the order in which they had appeared. This was "proved" by a long array of arguments, with special appeal to the older language and style of E. It was found, however, that here the critics had, all unwittingly, delivered themselves into the hands of the enemy—the orthodox scholars who still believed in a genuine and inspired Bible; and so the critics forthwith discovered that J was the older writer, and E the younger of the two. By-and-bye E, or as much of him as would hold together, was re-baptised. A new name was clapped upon him. He was called P (the Priestly writer), and was hustled down from the ninth century B.C. to the fourth century B.C. Poor fellow, it has fared with him as with the ass. Though a good deal is laid upon him, he is not much thought of now.

But worse troubles befell this "sacred science;" for "devout scholarship" was soon plunged into a labouring ocean of perplexities, in which, indeed, some big reputations went to the bottom. J and E were discovered to be most provokingly inconsistent. Apparently they forgot the parts which they

were expected to play. J was found to be using the name which had been assigned to E; and, not to be behind his friend, E was using the name which the critics had assured the public was J's very own. The critics had to bow to fate, and confess the facts. But, clearly, it would not do now to speak of the Elohist and the Jehovist; so E has since stood for "the Ephraimitic writer," and J for "the Judaic writer," the former belonging to the northern, the latter to the southern, kingdom.

It was cleverly done. But the trouble was not ended: it was only commencing. We had been told that we had merely to read Genesis with these new J and E spectacles to find ocular demonstration of the truth of the new theories. Just as an old seam parts before the edge of a sharp knife, so parted, we were told, the two old documents. The J document and the E document came clean away from each other, and each made a continuous and beautiful history by itself. But the enthusiasm was speedily damped. There were outcries, of course, against the new views. It was said that no separation of the Genesis documents was possible; that both names were used by only one writer; and that the Divine names and the two alleged styles were so intermingled that they never could have belonged to two different writers. The worst of it was that, when the critics looked into the matter, they found that their assertions could not really be maintained. What was to be done in this new trouble? Why, simply to admit that large portions could not be separated, and to call these

J E! That is the recognised method of the new unbelief. Darwin, in his *Origin of Species*, after enumerating facts which are in direct conflict with his theory, simply says that he nevertheless clings to his theory. That facts were against the critics made no difference; the theory must be saved at any cost.

Facilis descensus Averni—easy is the downward way. Bigger sacrifices of consistency were soon demanded, and the demands were met with surprising readiness. At first we were told that the traditional order—

The Law,
The Psalms,
The Prophets

—was confirmed by critical investigations. But it became evident, by-and-bye, that with that order the critics had gained nothing. They were still confronted by the miracle of Revelation. These Laws could not have sprung up through mere evolution *at so early a period*. The order must, consequently, be reversed; and it now stands:

The Prophets,
The Law,
The Psalms.

And this is the reason why no Psalms can be left to David, and why so many must belong to the times of the Maccabees. They are so full of references to the Law, that, of course, if the Law is late, the Psalms, which refer to the Law, must needs have been later!

But, if the critics have thus disagreed with themselves, and have repudiated what they had announced

as their own clearly-established conclusions, the representation that they are now in perfect accord with each other is ludicrously untrue. Dillmann has said that in Wellhausen's theory—that each of the so-called documents had undergone repeated revisions before they were united—he could only see "a hypothesis of perplexity." * They are not more agreed now. The "fine vein of ethical and religious reflection, which has sometimes been attributed to J," writes Dr. Geo. F. Moore, "is the result in part of an erroneous analysis." † Gunkel describes Budde, moreover, as often hypercritical, and his transposition of verses and inversions of the text as "quite capricious" *(recht willkürlich)*. Gunkel's own theory, that Genesis is composed of ancient Sagas or mythical legends, is now alarming his fellow-critics, who see in it the commencement of a new revolution.

But we are specially concerned at the present moment with the attitude of the higher criticism towards Genesis. That attitude is one of distinct and unanimous repudiation. According to Kuenen, the Book consists of legends, which, when they came to be written down, were "worked up in one way by one writer, and in another by another, according to the point of view and purpose of each respectively, so as often to be notably modified, or even completely transformed." ‡ It is not surprising, therefore, to learn from his history of the Israelitish religion that Genesis is entirely set aside. "Can we use the Old

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* *Die Bücher Exodus and Leviticus*, p. viii. † Art. *Genesis*, *Encyclopædia Biblica*.
‡ *The Hexateuch*, p. 38 (English translation).

Testament accounts of the history of Israel," he asks, "as a foundation for our review of its religious development?" "Our answer," he says, "must be in the negative." He adds: "The oldest accounts of the Mosaic time were as far removed from Israel's lawgiver as we Dutchmen are from the beginning of the Hoek and Kabel-jauw quarrels. Suppose that we knew of the latter only by traditions, which had never been committed to writing up to this time: should we have the boldness to trust ourselves to the historian, who now wrote them for the first time, as a safe guide? Surely it is almost inconceivable that a narrative, which was not written down until after so long an interval, should yet entirely accord with the reality. We find by experience every day that accounts which have been current but for a short period have admitted very strange elements, and, in some cases, have become unrecognisable. Without a perpetual miracle, the oral tradition of Israel cannot have remained free from this influence. Even before we have made acquaintance with the contents of the narratives, we take it for granted that they only give us half the truth, if even so much as that." *

This is the conclusion to which the critical theories inevitably lead. Let it once be granted that Genesis is a bundle of traditions, which some one put into written form long after the events, and everything which Kuenen here contends for must be conceded. There would still be a measure of truth in his argument even if the Scripture history gave

* *The Religion of Israel* (English translation), vol. i., pp. 17, 18.

us contemporary, but merely human, records. He proceeds upon the critical supposition that Revelation is a myth, and belief in the full inspiration of the Scripture a blind superstition. We shall soon see that facts compel us to acknowledge the inspiration of the Bible; but what we have now to notice is the repudiation of Genesis even as trustworthy history. To the critics it is a Book upon the statements of which no certain reliance can be placed. Bishop Ryle's estimate of its worth is an equally sad revelation of what this disbelief means. To him, Genesis is merely just such a compilation as Kuenen assumes it to be. It is, by his account, a collection of stories which had been told from hearth to hearth for long ages before they were put into writing. "We can hardly doubt," he says, "that the brightness and vividness of much Hebrew narrative is due to its having been derived from the lips of practised story-tellers. To this source we are probably indebted for those portions in the Books of Judges and Samuel which are regarded as presenting the best style of Hebrew prose. With them we must associate the two great collections of narrative, called by critics the Elohist and Jehovist writings, which forms so large a portion of the compilation of the Pentateuch. They, too, had been compilations; they, too, incorporated early written records. But in their pure and simple style, resembling closely the best portion of Judges and Samuel, we trace the influence of oral tradition. It makes itself heard and felt in the simple conversational prose, in the vividness of the description of

scenes, and in the naturalness and ease of the dialogues." *

The above extract proves how slender a logical equipment suffices to make a critic. The narratives in Genesis are written vividly and in clear conversational Hebrew. *Therefore* they must have been stories which had been passing for ages from lip to lip among the people! We tremble for the fate which awaits poor John Bunyan and other writers of "pure and simple" conversational English. The very excellence of these authors will prove their undoing. For, as soon as the critics have ended their Biblical unveilings and turned to this new field, the poor authors will be abolished as myths, or branded as impostors, and their well-loved pages broken up into the stories which, it will be straightway assumed, they had collected and published as original matter! But in view of what has already resulted from the critical delusion, will Dr. Ryle tell us what is the exact worth of such a precious collection? Can he accept it as history? or will he gravely direct his clergy to it as the authoritative Word of God?

To these examples let me add another, taken from the latest fashion worn by this unbelief. Gunkel's rule for distinguishing the mythical from the historical is frankly rationalistic. He says that the narratives of Genesis, for the most part of a religious sort, speak continually of God; and this, he says, is one of the most certain tests for distinguishing poetry from history. According to him, God is never visibly

* *The Canon of the Old Testament*, p. 35.

manifested. "Quite otherwise" is it, he says, "in many narratives of Genesis." He then compares them with some other Old Testament narratives; "for," he writes, "these offences against probability, indeed against possibility, are not met with everywhere in the Old Testament, but only in quite well-defined fragments of the same tone. In other fragments, on the other hand, which we hold to be specially, or more specially, historical, we do not observe them. We think, above all, of the middle portion of the Book of 2 Samuel, the history of Absalom's rebellion, that most precious piece of ancient historical writing in Israel. The world, which is here pictured, is that which we know well. In this world there swims no iron in the water, and no serpents talk. No God nor angel appears as one person among the others; but everything is done as we are accustomed to see it." *

We shall find abundant answer, by-and-bye, to these cheap sneers. I quote them here merely to show what the attitude of the higher criticism to these revelations of God really is. It is that of open, and now, indeed, scurrilous, infidelity. Wherever the Scripture tells us that God was manifested, or that God intervened, we have only, in Gunkel's opinion, "faded myths." † He repudiates this obvious conclusion, but, in a way which only confirms it. "It is no question," he says, "of belief or of unbelief, but only a question of fuller knowledge as to whether the narratives of Genesis are history or legend. It is

* *Genesis*, p. 15. † Page xvii.

objected," he continues, "that Jesus and the apostles have plainly held these narratives for fact and not poetry. Certainly. But the men of the New Testament have no special position in such questions, but share the ideas of their time." * So perfect is the unity of the Scripture, and so completely has God bound up the Bible with His redeeming work, that we cannot cast away even its first Book without at the same time thus tearing up the very foundations of the Christian Church.

But, happily, there are still multitudes with whom the testimony of our Divine Lord and His inspired apostles cannot be thus brushed aside. Let us ask, then, which side is taken by those who will ever be the highest "Authorities" for the Church of Christ. The Creation-History (Gen. i. 1—ii. 3) is given by the critics to their imaginary writer, P. This is the priestly writer, who, they say, fabricated large parts of the Scripture to obtain for the Aaronic family the control of the Jewish ritual after the return from Babylon. For such an astute conspirator he seems, according to the critics, to have been poorly endowed, having neither genius nor talent. The earlier critics gave him both: but the newer critics can see no trace of either. Gunkel speaks of his "insipidity and monotony," and says that he is "evidently sufficiently painstaking, and exemplary in his love of order; but to him, as to many another learned man, the poetic sense was not given." He then represents him as consulting the old "Sagas," the popular

* Page xii.

legends, and actually treating as records of facts what were the products of the poetic imagination. So he, in his simplicity, put down the results of his researches as the Creation-History! * Dr. Moore also hints that P did not scruple to avail himself of the arts of the impostor, for he talks of his "calculated archaism." †

It is this which lies behind the assurance, so constantly reiterated by our professors and ambitious preachers, that we must look for neither science nor history in this and other opening chapters of Genesis. But what does our Lord say? We read in Gen. i. 27 that "God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him: male and female created He them." In Matthew xix. 3-6 we are told that the Pharisees came tempting Jesus, "and saying unto Him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? And He answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that He who made them at the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." Here the first and second chapters of Genesis are ratified by our Lord, and by Him certified to us, as *records of fact.* So true is it that God *did* create man, that He is described as "He who made them at the first." Our Lord's reply, too, is based upon the absolute veracity of the record even in special details—"He made them male

* *Kommentar*, pp. lxxxi., lxxxii. † Art. *Genesis, Encyclopædia Biblica.*

and female." Indeed, the words in the end of chap. ii., quoted here in verse 5, are pointed to as an *accurate report of the words of God*, and the whole is taken as fully-inspired Scripture. "Have ye not read?" asks Jesus. In other words, Are you not aware that the Word of God has already answered your question, and put this matter beyond dispute? These early chapters, therefore, *are* science, if science means perfect acquaintance with fact. And they are history given by the inspiration of God.

A striking illustration of the place accorded by the New Testament to these early chapters of Genesis meets us in the Epistle to the Hebrews. The apostle has just spoken of God's declaration that the Israelites should not enter into His rest, and he proceeds: "For He spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all His works" (Hebrews iv. 4). This "certain place" (named indefinitely as a hint, no doubt, to these Hebrew Christians that they ought to search the Scriptures) is Genesis ii. 2. The Creation-History is, therefore, not only true; but *God Himself is also the narrator*. The Author, whom the critics patronisingly describe as a patient compiler from old legends, or as an unblushing forger, and whom they name P, is no other than their and our Creator! Again, in Romans ix., there are references to incidents in the history of the three Patriarchs—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. By the critics these narratives are entirely set aside as unhistorical. Jacob and Isaac, according to them, never existed. Their names are names of tribes,

they say, which, in the course of time, were supposed to have been, at the first, names of individuals; and then, having the names upon their hands, an ignorant but inventive age imagined a history for them! As to Abraham, Professor George Adam Smith is inclined to think that *he* did actually live; but he is perfectly confident that he never had the history attributed to him in Genesis.*

But it *is* attributed to him, not in Genesis only, but also here in Romans and elsewhere in the New Testament. The apostle refers (verse 9) to the Divine interview with Abraham on the plains of Mamre, and to the promise of an heir then given to him by God. Here, therefore, that whole incident, so utterly objectionable to the men who believe that "miracles do not happen," is assumed to be true. In the earlier verses (6-8) the subsequent rejection of Ishmael and the selection of Isaac are also referred to as equally unquestionable. Then (verses 10-13) we have the reality of the incident of the birth of Esau and Jacob and the prophecy which preferred the younger to the elder, discarded, like the rest, as absolute myths by the critics, similarly assumed to be facts. Our attention is directed to all these by the apostle as to God's own action, as to a revelation of the sovereign choice and appointment of the Almighty. For he immediately asks: "What shall we say, then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid." Is New Testament Inspiration, then, a myth? Is there no Divine Revelation of a way of escape from judgment? Are we yet

* *Modern Criticism and the Preaching of the Old Testament.*

in our sins, and are we, equally with the atheist, to be henceforth without God in the world and without hope? They who stand with the critics—that Korah host—are compelled to answer "Yes" to each of these questions. As for ourselves, we stand with Moses, and our reply is, "No."

There are similar references to other parts of the Patriarchal history which further manifest the New Testament witness to it, and lend added emphasis to the above questions. But can anything make it plainer in what place the continuance of the Christian faith, of Christian service, and of Christian hope, will alone be found? These have flourished where the Scripture has been received as the Word of God. They have withered everywhere besides.

CHAPTER V.

The Antiquity of Genesis: The Samaritan Pentateuch.

WE are not without indications, as we have already seen, that the dates which the critics have assigned to the various so-called "sources" of Genesis may undergo another change. As our position, however, rests upon facts, and not upon ever-changing theories, this does not trouble us. We shall show, first of all, that there is a date for the origin of Genesis, beneath which no theory can rightly take

us. We shall then mention some other facts which limit its composition to the time of Moses.

The critics have long attributed the Book to three authors—P, the priestly writer; J, the Jehovist, and latterly the Judean writer; and E, the Elohist, whom it is now found more convenient to speak of as the Ephraimitic writer. Behind these three gather spectral forms of other writers; and so numerous do these sometimes appear to the disturbed critical vision that they are spoken of as "strata." Into these speculations it would serve no good purpose to enter, nor need we trouble ourselves with the ages ascribed by one writer and another to the various critical phantoms. Fortunately the reliability of their dissection of the Book, and of the dates assigned to the various parts, admits of an easy test. They tell us that P (to whom they assign the first chapter and parts of many other sections) contributed his portion about 450 or 400 B.C. This date is a chief corner-stone of the critical edifice; and we now proceed to show that it is impossible, and that the portions of Genesis, and of the rest of the Pentateuch, assigned to P, were in existence long before either 400 or 450 B.C.

References to a Samaritan Pentateuch, written in the ancient Phœnician and Hebrew character, are frequent both in the early Christian writings and in the Jewish Talmud. It is referred to by Origen and Jerome among others; while the Rabbis are represented as frequently taunting the Samaritans with ignorance of the Law, of the possession of which

they were evidently proud. For long centuries, however, all knowledge of the Samaritan Pentateuch had perished in the Christian Church; and, on the revival of learning, it came to be regarded by European scholars as a myth. But, in 1616, Pietro della Valle, the distinguished Roman traveller, while visiting Damascus, was introduced to a small colony of Samaritans. In the interesting letter, in which he describes his intercourse with them, he mentions some details, which proved how rigorously they observed the Mosaic Law. "I had great satisfaction," he adds, "in seeing in the house of one of their *Chachàm*, or Doctors [of the Law], four copies of the *Sefer-Thora*, that is, of the Pentateuch of Moses, in Samaritan characters. . . These books were very ancient, and all written in Samaritan characters, on large leaves of parchment." The Samaritans, like the Jews, had apparently exercised great care in securing faithful copies of the Sacred Book, as will be seen from the following. He says that, at a small cost and with the help of a Jewish friend, "I had from the *Chachàm* two *Sefer-Thora* in this writing, one of those which are on parchment . . . and another, which belonged to a lady, written on paper, but very ancient and very correct, as four or five *Chachàm* give their testimony at the end of the book in Arabic, in which they, each individually and at different times, assure all that they have perused it from one end to the other, and have found no mistake."

Della Valle presented the parchment copy to the French Ambassador, by whom it was forwarded to

Paris, and so brought to the knowledge of the learned. The result was a heated and long-continued controversy. Morinus, a Romanist theologian, published a work, in 1631, in which he declared that the Samaritan Pentateuch was to be preferred to that which has been handed down by the Jews. Its variations, he argued, showed a "superior lucidity and harmony," and stated that they were supported by the early Greek translation, the Septuagint. The attempt of Morinus was, no doubt, largely due to the Romanist irritation caused by the constant appeal of the Protestants to the original Scriptures. If it could be shown that there was uncertainty as to the original text, the Protestants would be deprived of their confidence, and their appeals of their force. But a crowd of disputants joined in the controversy who were not influenced by that motive, but who, nevertheless, made this a burning question for two centuries. "It would now appear," says the late Emanuel Deutsch, "as if the unquestioning rapture with which every new literary discovery was formerly hailed, the innate animosity against the Masoretic (Jewish) text, the general preference for the LXX. (the Septuagint), and the defective state of Semitic studies" had largely to do with the bitterness and the long continuance of the struggle.*

But the strangest circumstance in connection with the episode is the fact that it did not seem to occur to anyone that it was necessary to make a thorough study of the Samaritan Pentateuch, and so to ascer-

* *Literary Remains of the Late Emanuel Deutsch*, p. 408.

tain its character. When this was done by Gesenius, the controversy died without hope of resurrection. It occurred to that great Orientalist to classify the variations, and so to ascertain what had led to them. It was then seen that, with the exception of two exceedingly slight changes, "the Mosaic laws and ordinances had nowhere been tampered with." * That this is a most important fact, in view of present assertions, will be apparent by-and-bye. There are, however, systematic changes, the evident object of which was to prove that Gerizim, and not Jerusalem, was the Divinely-selected Temple site. But the great body of the variations is plainly due to a desire to make the Book intelligible to the Samaritans. Comparatively modern are substituted for ancient grammatical forms, words, and phrases. Obscurities are removed, and additions are made, the object of which is to explain and to enforce the statements of the original text. Few things have been so complete as this vindication of the Hebrew text. Gesenius selected four readings, which he judged to be preferable to those of the Old Testament as possessed by the Jews and by ourselves. "The reader will find," says Deutsch, "that they, too, have been all but unanimously rejected." These results formed an overwhelming demonstration that those who attacked the Hebrew text on this ground had no case whatever. That text had clearly been in the hands of the man, or the men, from whom the Samaritans had received the sacred Book.

* Page 410.

But when, and how, did it come into their possession? That these non-Israelites should possess this Law, and should cherish it as their own most sacred possession, is a most peculiar circumstance. There is absolutely no parallel to it. We might have expected the Moabites and the Ammonites, and more especially the Edomites who were so closely connected in origin with the Israelites, to have welcomed the Mosaic institutions. But they never had them, nor did they ever display the slightest desire to possess them. We discover no trace, indeed, of approaches of this kind on the part of any neighbouring nationality. We find, instead, deep-rooted antipathy, and almost incessant hostility; and that hostility and antipathy were nowhere more pronounced than among the Samaritans themselves.

It must, therefore, have been some very special, if not extraordinary, occasion which led to this cordial adoption, and persistent retention, of the Mosaic Law by the Samaritans. Have we any explanation of what caused this religious revolution? There is one answer, and one only. We are told, in the Book of 2 Kings which was written before the return from the Babylonian Exile, that the king of Assyria, after the conquest of Samaria in 722 B.C., re-peopled the cities of Samaria. Large numbers of colonists were drawn from various parts of the extended Assyrian Empire and planted in the conquered and desolated territory. But God would still be honoured in the land destined from eternity to be the inheritance of His people, and a judgment was inflicted upon the

heathen settlers, which was immediately recognised as coming from His hand. "And so it was at the beginning of their dwelling there," says the Scripture, "that they feared not the Lord: therefore the Lord sent lions among them, which slew some of them. Wherefore they spake to the king of Assyria, saying, The nations which thou hast removed, and placed in the cities of Samaria, know not the manner of the God of the land: therefore He hath sent lions among them, and, behold, they slay them, because they know not the manner of the God of the land. Then the king of Assyria commanded, saying, Carry thither one of the priests whom ye brought from thence; and let them go and dwell there, and let him teach them the manner of the God of the land. Then one of the priests whom they had carried away from Samaria came and dwelt in Bethel, and taught them how they should fear the Lord" (xvii. 25-28). They seem to have become attentive and diligent pupils. They learned "the manner of the God of the land," and "feared the Lord." But there was one fatal defect in this coming to the God of Israel: they still clung to their old idolatries. The new service was not put in the place of their former worship: it was merely added to it. "So these nations feared the Lord, and served their graven images, both their children, and their children's children: as did their fathers, so do they unto this day" (verse 41).

We learn here, therefore, that a priest and his family were sent back to northern Israel. These settled at

Bethel, and the work of instruction in "the manner of the God of the land" was begun and continued. It was done, too, with evident thoroughness. A new priesthood was created for the special work of performing and perpetuating among the Samaritans the service of Jehovah; but as it was impossible to obtain the services of Aaronic priests and Levites, they fell back upon the plan, adopted long before by Jeroboam at the founding of the Israelitish kingdom. They selected for the service the men who resembled the Levites in this one respect that they had no inheritance among their brethren. "So they feared the Lord, and made unto themselves of the lowest of them priests of the high places, who sacrificed for them in the houses of the high places" (verse 32). Now, in preparing a priesthood and establishing the worship of Jehovah among the new colonists, the possession of the Law was plainly a necessity. We know, for example, that the Samaritans celebrated the Passover; for this is still one of their national institutions. To do this, however, they required the Passover ritual—those minute directions given in the Pentateuch for the observance of the rite according to "the manner of the God of the land." The like demand was necessarily made in regard to each of the sacrifices, for the Day of Atonement, for the great feasts, for the consecration of priests, for the restoration of the leper, and the other rites and observances. This was the more necessary that the temper of the time must have insisted upon the greatest possible exactitude; for it was felt that the lives of the settlers depended

upon minute and strict obedience, and that everything must be had which would inform them as to "the manner of the God of the land."

Putting, then, other considerations aside for the moment, is it not the natural conclusion that the Samaritans must have received the Pentateuch at this time when its possession was so urgently required? This conclusion will be confirmed as other facts are considered. When the Jews had returned to Jerusalem, at the close of the Exile, and had laid the foundation of the Temple, "the people of the land" immediately sent a deputation to wait upon "Zerubbabel and the chief of the fathers" with the request: "Let us build with you: for we seek your God, as ye do; and we do sacrifice unto Him since the days of Esar-haddon king of Assyria, who brought us up hither" (Ezra iv. 2). The request, as we know, was refused, and the beginning was thereby made of that long-enduring hostility between the Samaritan and the Jew. But what has to be specially noted is that, in the sixth century B.C., the Samaritans believe themselves to be practically Israelites. "We seek your God," said they, "as ye do." The worship of Jehovah they affirm to be a national feature with them as it is with the Jews. This is not denied in the reply that is given to them; for the refusal of their offer is based upon the fact that they have no natural right—no right based upon descent—to participate in the building of the Temple. Is it to be believed, then, that the elaborate Israelitish worship was being carried on, and had been carried

on for more than 100 years, by a people who had no copy of the Scripture containing the due order and the details of the Jewish worship?

I do not insist upon the difficulties attending the supposition that the Pentateuch was adopted by the Samaritans at a later time. In the way of that theory there lies not only the fact that the hostility between the two peoples makes the later adoption of the Pentateuch extremely improbable, but there is also the very natural inquiry why they should have adopted the Law after they had long had in operation all that the Law could teach them. There are two other facts which point to the conclusion that the Samaritans had obtained the Law at the time spoken of in 2 Kings. First of all, they have never had more than the Pentateuch—the five Books of the *Torah*, the Mosaic Law. This is perfectly intelligible, when we learn that they received it for the special purpose of instruction in "the manner of the God of the land." For that specific purpose they required nothing more. Additional Books would, indeed, have been an incumbrance, with which they would not have burdened themselves at such a time. There was no call for them, and they would have constituted the proverbial embarrassment of riches—a thing which an instructor in such circumstances is most careful to avoid. It was the Law alone that was then needed; and the fact, that with the Samaritans the Law alone has been their sacred Book, accords fully with the circumstances of the period. On the other hand, if it had been a question of adopting the Jewish Scriptures,

either then or at a later time, it would be inexplicable that not a single Book of the other Scriptures was ever included in their collection.

The second fact is, that the Samaritan Pentateuch is written in what we know to have been the ancient Hebrew alphabet. When the Jews returned, after the seventy years' captivity, they had forgotten much. They appear to have become so accustomed to the square letters, which now form the Hebrew writing, that copies of the Scripture intended for their use had to be written in that character. The fact of this change is attested by the Jews themselves. The Samaritan Pentateuch, on the other hand, retains the ancient Phœnician and Hebrew letters. These are the same as those which have been found upon the Moabite stone, belonging to the ninth century B.C. This monument has another peculiarity in common with the Samaritan Scripture. The letters which go to form a word are enclosed between two circular dots, like the period with which we close our sentences.

All these facts distinctly favour the early date of the Samaritan Code. But if the Samaritans were in possession of the Law in the seventh century B.C., what becomes of the critical theory of the date of P, and of the origin of Genesis and the rest of the Pentateuch as we have them now? The portions of Genesis and the legislation of the Pentateuch, which critics ascribe to the imaginary P, are all in the Samaritan Bible two centuries before P was in existence! I have already mentioned the important fact, that, with two slight variations of letters, there is no

difference between the Samaritan and the Hebrew in regard to the Mosaic legislation. P's work was already embodied, therefore, in both Codes hundreds of years before the critics believe and teach that the Law was forged. It also existed as we have it to-day; for in this respect the Samaritan testifies that there has been no change. No demonstration could show more completely that Genesis and the rest of the Pentateuch have never undergone this degrading manipulation, and that P, J, and E are themselves myths.

CHAPTER VI.

The Age of Genesis: The Test of Language and of Archæology.

THE Samaritan Pentateuch, as we have just seen, shows no trace of the various "sources" which figure so largely in critical dreams. We have now to note that archæology and sober scholarship find the Book to be a unity with a distinct character, in which high antiquity is a marked feature. The critics annex the Book of Joshua to the Pentateuch, and name the new collection "the Hexateuch." But the Pentateuch is distinguished from Joshua by characteristics which make the union impossible. The Books plainly belong to different ages. The language which the Israelites brought back to Palestine was, with the exception of its Egyptian ingredients, the speech of

Canaan two centuries before. In that interval, however, the language had been modified. The Hebrew of the new settlers had necessarily, therefore, to adapt itself to their changed surroundings. The result is seen in the Books written after the conquest as compared with those which were written before it.

The student of Hebrew will find a selection of these differences in the Rev. F. E. Spencer's *Did Moses write the Pentateuch after all?* (pp. 224-240)*; and in Keil's *Introduction to the Old Testament.* The following facts, though they form but a very small part of the available evidence, are more than enough to establish the antiquity of Genesis and of the other Books of the Pentateuch. When two nouns are united together, they are joined by means of the letter *yod*. This custom entirely disappears in the later Books. The masculine form of the third personal pronoun singular, *hu'* ("he"), is used instead of the feminine *hi'* ("she") in 195 places of the Pentateuch. This occurs only in the Pentateuch, and is a strong testimony to its antiquity. The feminine pronoun begins to appear—it is found in eleven passages—but it had then only commenced to make its way, and the masculine was still in almost constant use as a common term. A similar feature is the employment of the word *na'ar* ("a youth"), for both a young man and a maiden. The feminine *na'arah* is met with only once, and in its place we find the masculine *na'ar* twenty-one times. Here, again, the separate form for the feminine has merely begun to enter an appear-

* Elliot Stock, London.

ance; but, when we come to Joshua and the later Books, it has asserted its rights and assumed its place.

Another mark of high antiquity occurs in the demonstrative pronouns, *hallazeh* and *Ha'el*. These forms are found only in the Pentateuch. The verb *zabad* ("to endue"), and the noun *zebed* ("a gift") are used in Genesis, but appear in later Books only in proper names. *Kibshan* ("a furnace") occurs only in Genesis and Exodus. The reader is familiar with the striking phrase, "to be gathered to his fathers," as a description of death; but he will discover it only in the Pentateuch and once in Judges. It was extremely natural for the Patriarchal period, with its strong family ties, to conceive of death in that way; but, with altered customs, there came also changed notions and expressions. The phrase is consequently a sure mark that Genesis belongs to the older time. To these a large number of words and phrases might be added. The above, however, is sufficient to indicate their nature. Let me now mention an equally conclusive proof, which bears upon all the so-called "documents," and which shows how impossible are the late critical dates. As the reader is aware, a great deal is said in Genesis about Egypt. How these references strike Egyptologists the following extract will show. In closing a series of valuable papers on "Ancient Egypt" in *The Contemporary Review*, the late R. S. Poole of the British Museum, the well-known Egyptologist, thus makes reference to the great question of the time—the age of the Pentateuch. "The date of

the Hebrew documents in general," he says, "has been here assumed to be that assigned to them by the older scholars. This position is justified by the Egyptian evidence. German and Dutch critics have laboured with extraordinary acuteness and skill upon the Mosaic documents alone, with such illustrations as they could obtain from collateral records, using such records as all the older, and too many of the later, classical scholars out of Germany and France have used, coins and inscriptions, not as independent sources, but as mere illustrations. The work has been that of great literary critics, not of archæologists. The result has been to reduce the date of the documents, except a few fragments, by many centuries.

"The Egyptian documents emphatically call for a reconsideration of the whole question of the date of the Pentateuch. It is now certain that the narrative of the history of Joseph, and the sojourn and exodus of the Israelites, that is to say, the portion from Genesis xxxix. to Exodus xv., so far as it relates to Egypt, is substantially not much later than B.C. 1300; in other words, was written while the memory of the events was fresh. The minute accuracy of the text is inconsistent with any later date. It is not merely that it shows knowledge of Egypt, but knowledge of Egypt under the Ramessides, and yet earlier. The condition of the country, the chief cities on the frontier, the composition of the army, are true of the age of the Ramessides, and not true of the age of the Pharaohs contemporary with Solomon and his successors. If the Hebrew documents are of the close of the period

of the kings of Judah, how is it that they are true of the earlier condition, not of that which was contemporary with those kings? Why is the Egypt of the Law markedly different from the Egypt of the prophets, each condition being described consistently with its Egyptian records, themselves contemporary with the events? Why is Egypt described in the Law as one kingdom, and no hint given of the break-up of the empire into the small principalities mentioned by Isaiah (xix. 2)? Why do the proper names belong to the Ramesside and earlier age, without a single instance of these Semitic names which came into fashion with the Bubastite line in Solomon's time? Why do *Z*oan-Rameses and *Z*oar take the places of Migdol and Tahpanhes? Why are the foreign mercenaries, such as the Lubim, spoken of in the constitution of the Egyptian armies in the time of the kingdom of Judah, wholly unmentioned? The relations of Egypt with foreign countries are not less characteristic. The kingdom of Ethiopia, which overshadowed Egypt from before Hezekiah's time and throughout his reign, is unmentioned in the earlier documents. The earlier Assyrian Empire, which rose for a time on the fall of the Egyptian, nowhere appears.

"These agreements have not failed to strike foreign Egyptologists, who have no theological bias. These independent scholars, without actually formulating any view of the date of the greater part of the Pentateuch, appear, uniformly, to treat its text as an authority to be cited side by side with the Egyptian

monuments. So Lepsius in his researches on the date of the Exodus, and Brugsch in his discussion of the route, Chabas in his paper on Rameses and Pithom. Of course, it would be unfair to implicate any one of these scholars in the inferences expressed above, but at the same time it is impossible that they can, for instance, hold Kuenen's theories of the date of the Pentateuch, so far as the part relating to Egypt is concerned. They have taken the two sets of documents, Hebrew and Egyptian, side by side, and in the working of elaborate problems found everything consistent with accuracy on both sides; and, of course, accuracy would not be maintained in a tradition handed down through several centuries." *

The last statement commends itself to everyone. Kuenen, Gunkel, and the rest of the critics, have not only admitted that tradition cannot be accepted as transmitting to us accurate historic details, but they have also put their rejection of Genesis on that very basis. The converse, however, is equally true. If a document is distinguished by this accuracy in details, *it cannot be a late tradition*. That is the serious position in which the higher criticism is placed by the discoveries in Egypt. Its conclusion, that Genesis is tradition, is repudiated by those who know the things of which Genesis speaks. Another fact, which I have dealt with in *The New Biblical Guide*,† may be said to complete the demonstration. It is assumed by the writer of Genesis that his first readers *understand Egyptian* as well as Hebrew. Thus, when he tells us that Pharaoh

*Vol. xxxiv., pp. 757-759. †Vol. iv., 170, etc.

named Joseph *Zaphnath-paaneah* (or, rather, *pa-anch*) [Genesis xli. 45] he does not explain that the name means "Bread of life." It clearly does not occur to him that there is the slightest reason for his doing so. These readers of his understand the words as fully as if he gave their meaning in Hebrew. There are other Egyptian terms, too, which have entered into their every-day speech, which are not explained, and evidently for the same reason. When we ask what generation that was, the only rational reply is that it could not be later than that of the Exodus, to which Jewish tradition has always assigned the origin of Genesis, as of the rest of the Pentateuch. In other words, Genesis first saw the light in the days of the leader, and of the people, of the Exodus.

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